

# How To Train Your Dragon: Rebirth

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Summary: "YOU?" I said as recognized his voice "You were in the hut. Why did you bring me here.". "You ... were on crate in the middle of the ocean I ... I ... didn't think I needed permission to save your life." The boy said backing away defensively. "So you could interrogate me?" I yelled. "No that was Astrid she is a little ... untrusting." the boy said nervously. (Ch-3 Kidnapper)

## 1. Rebirth

**\*\*Authors note:** Just a heads up that the whole story isn't written as incoherently as this chapter. I was trying to emulate the thoughts of **\*Spoiler Alert\*** someone dying from dehydration. Anyways, enjoy.\*\*

I am a newborn. Rocking in a crib. The world shimmering before me. I could sense it but not live it. Then the shimmering world blurred, or did it focus.

I was hallucinating. I shouldn't be hallucinating as a newborn.

The shimmering world became a deep ocean. I became a young girl about 14, no 15 years old. I was in a crib? No I was on a crate, a wooden crate bobbing on a calm sea.

It looked so real. I almost wanted it to be real, wanted to see the world as a teen. To travel and live my life to the fullest. Wait. No it can't be real I am in a crib. Any moment now my parents will come in and stare in awe at their baby girl. There was something in their, something in my head that caused doubt. What was it? Then it came flooding, gushing from the inner layers of my head to bask in my conscious mind.

THIRST.

I shifted on my crate dismissing my hallucination of being a newborn. Looking down into the sea I caught a glimpse of another teenage girl

under the water. She was looking up at me with hazy grey eyes. She had red hair that came down around her shoulder blades and was let down in a horrible condition, pale ivory skin that was caked with dried salt for the oceans spray, her lips, probably at one time a full and lush red, were white and cracking.

I reached down and tried to connect with her. She was reaching a hand towards me as well and our hands touched. As soon as we had touched she disappeared as the world between us ripped and distorted her into nothing.

I would have wept for the the loss of my only companion if I could remember what weeping was. Why would I weep for that loss of companionship? What was loss?

This was it. I could feel the lights going out. Soon all their were only a handful of them left. Less than that handful were even coming to mind. One of them must be THIRST and then. COLD. AFRAID.

THIRST. COLD. AFRAID.

Then bliss. A shadow enveloped me. Then I was floating. Lifted above the sea by a black talon. A beat in my ears. WHOSH. WHOSH. WHOSH. I was leaving. Going into the clouds. To Valhala. I closed my eyes and waited for my rebirth.

I was laying down. A few of the lights were back but the old ones were still there. I could open my eyes but I didn't want to. I was just being prepared, that was it, to go to Valahala. Until I was there I wouldn't open my eyes.

Slowly THIRST became dimmer but did not fade. I could hear the valkeries around me talking about my preparation. One sounded like a boy who asked a voiceless spirt "Is she going to be okay?".

He was answered with a series of scraping noises. A different voice of a girl spoke now "Where did you say you found her?"

The boy said "A fair distance south, clinging onto a piece of driftwood in the middle of the sea."

The girl gave a single sound laughing at the boys statement.

"Something funny Astrid?"

"Convenient ..." stated the girl.

"What?! Please explain to me how being lost at sea with nothing but a crate to stop you from drowning and being saved within a inch of your life is convenient?" the boy said in a frustrated tone.

The girl explained "I'm just saying she is going to have some explaining to do when she wakes up. Hiccup, you remember what happened with Heather don't you?"

The boy immediately retorted "That was ... kind of ... different Astrid."

The girl gave another solitary laugh at the boys statement and

finished with "Not different enough if you ask me."

What was taking so long? Shouldn't the trip to Valhalla be blissful and and quick? Now I could feel my head being moved. There was sensation again. I could feel the hand on my neck and then the hard unrelenting structure of a cup being placed near my face. The contents of it poured down my throat. WATER! I have not felt it slide down my throat for such a long time it choked me. My body acted on instinct. I sprung up from my position and inhaled deeply. I opened my eyes as I started coughing up the water. Wherever I was this had better not be Valhalla.

## 2. Thief

A hut? Why was I in a hut? Springing up off my bed had left me dizzy and light headed. I grabbed the bridge of my nose and tried to calm down. My vision became focused again and I saw several shelves of ingredients I assumed were for making medicines.

A hand touched my arm and I screamed and looked around the room for its owner. There was no one here. All there was were shelves of ingredients a fireplace and a staff standing in place in-front of me. Wait what was holding the staff up? I looked down towards the staffs base. I screamed and jumped off of the table at what I saw. An old woman. A shrunken, shriveled old woman making a gesture with her hands.

With my back now against a shelf I looked for the closest thing I could grab for a weapon. I ended up grabbing a soup ladle and holding it with both hands, pointing it at the old woman.

"Stay away from me" I said shuffling towards the door.

I keep the ladle pointed at the old woman as if it were a sword and then dropped it and sprinted out the door. I only realized that the hut was elevated on a cliff and there was a small ladder to get in and out of the hut when I hit the ground. The ground was fairly soft which I was immensely grateful. However it also happened to be wet and muddy at the base of the ladder.

I wrenched myself out of the sticky mud and ran into the nearby forest. I was kept running until my body stopped me. An old familiar feeling came back to me. THIRST. My body felt weak. It was even hard to breathe with a throat so parched.

Standing still I had more time to listen and look at my surrounding and one sensation stood out above the rest. I could hear the sharp clang of metal being worked on a forge. I was a long ways off but if there was a forge there was a town and a town meant WATER. I started moving in the direction of the the sound. It took several minutes to move through the forest but eventually buildings started appearing through the trees. I stopped on the edge of the forest. A few buildings I could identify right away There were several houses, a blacksmith, and a large gate in between two hideous statues which must be the town hall. Then I saw it, a WELL. I almost started running right towards it before I realized that it was too open and I would probably get caught. I had no idea who these people are or what they want with me so, as thirsty as I am, I couldn't go to the well.

They must be searching for me now so I have to act fast. I then spotted a building that was secluded from the rest. It was larger than the rest of the houses and was situated near the steps heading towards the town hall. Luckily it looked to have a backdoor so that I could sneak in. There had to be some water in there and maybe some food and supplies to help me escape.

I then skirted the edge of the forrest until the house was between me most of the other houses. After a quick look to see if anyone was in view I sprinted towards the house. It took very little time to make it to the backdoor of the house and when I reached it I slowed to a creep. The wooden door looked sturdy and it would take hard hit to open. I backed up and charged at the door. I burst through with no resistance and fell on the floor of the house. I looked back at the door and saw there was no damage done to the frame or the door.

"Unlocked? Who leaves their backdoor unlocked?" I whispered to myself.

I then looked around at my surroundings. The house was empty apart from a table, some chairs, a fire-pit, and a wooden bench near the front door. There were stairs leading to an upstairs loft were I couldn't see. After a moment I concluded if no one was coming down to see what the large bang of me crashing though the door was, I was alone.

I got up and searched the kitchen area. Looking through the cabinets I found several loafs of bread which I took out rolled them into a cloth. I was loosing hope when I reached the end of the cabinet and saw three buckets on the ground, two of them filled with fresh water. I fell to my knees and grabbed one of the buckets. I was too thirsty to even entertain the idea of finding a cup so I just put my lips around the bucket edge. I tilted the bucket too fast and water came gushing around my face and onto the floor but I didn't care. Half of the contents of the bucket was either down my throat or spilled on the ground when I stopped for a breath. I smiled and closed my eyes in complete bliss. Even if I could have avoided this entire endeavor in the first place I wouldn't trade this moment for anything. Finally it was leaving after all that time the thirst was now gone. Something shook me from my trance. A sound, a horrible sound that could only be one thing. It was the screeching of metal hinges as a door was opening!

### 3. Kidnapper

I shot my head towards the front door. It was opening and I ducked down for a lack of a better method to hide. Luckily I was already positioned next to the table so I was mostly concealed. A boy, about my age, in a green tunic and grey wool pants entered through the door. There was a strange metallic sound that occurred when he walked. I could now see that he had a prosthetic metal leg. He was very skinny and with his prosthetic leg he wouldn't be too hard to overpower. I was planning an attack to force him to help me escape. I started to get up to pounce when I immediately ducked down again. He had his back to me but was talking to someone out the door.

"Astrid could you check on that girl before you put Stormfly away for

the day?" the boy asked.

There was a reply which I could not hear from my position.

"Please Astrid i've got work to do with Gobber."

There was another muffled response and then a gust of wind.

The boy then let out a frustrated sigh and stated "Why is this always so difficult?"

He motioned to close the door. This was my chance. With his back turned towards me I ran up behind him and pushed him into a wall. He let out a small moan as the wind was knocked out of him. I was not taking any chances so I grabbed his wrist and twisted his arm behind his back with relative ease. Then I placed my other hand over his mouth. We just stood there for a few second. I think we were both stunned at what I just achieved. I then started to whisper in his hear in a semi-intimidating tone "Listen I don't want to have to knock out a cripple so what you are going to do is keep your mouth shut and you are going to help me find a ship so I can get out of here."

There was a a small pause and when I was sure he wasn't going to respond I twisted his arm a little more and said "Deal?!".

There were a few muffled sounds coming from under my hand but from what I could tell he agreed. I then let go of his arm and slowly took my hand off his mouth ensuring he wouldn't call for help the moment I took it off.

The boy looked at me awkwardly for a few seconds. He then opened his mouth and I almost clamped my hand over it. He spoke in a nervous but quiet tone of voice "So ... you look like you have gotten better."

"YOU!?" I said as recognized his voice "You were in the hut. Why did you bring me here."

"You ... were on crate in the middle of the ocean I ... I ... didn't think I needed permission to save your life." The boy said backing away defensively.

"So you could interrogate me!?" I yelled.

"No I ..." the boy retorted.

"I heard your conversation in the hut, don't deny it!" I now grabbed the scruff of his tunic.

"No that was Astrid she is a little ... untrusting. We just wanted to know if we could trust you not to do ... something like this!"

I calmed down a little let go of the boys tunic and said "We are wasting time. Do you keep your ships stocked with water?"

He looked stunned by the change in tone the conversation had taken but answered as soon as I shot him a look.

"Yes ... I mean I'm pretty sure."

"Do they or don't they?" I asked in my intimidating tone again.

"I don't really know ... do these look like the mussels of a dock worker to you?"

There was a faint smile that crept across my face. It was rare to find someone who would make a joke at their own expense. I could tell the boy sensed the smile and wiped it off my face immediately. I couldn't do that again if I wanted to maintain dominance over him and have him get me off this island.

"Then that means you are carrying a bucket of water for me." I said aggressively.

The boy oddly responded in a sarcastic demeanor "Oh ... lucky me."

I gestured towards the buckets that I was previously drinking from and he walked over and picked up the full one. Straining with its weight he said "uhg ... If you are going to be kidnapping me then ... we should get to know each other. I'm Hiccup"

The boy then paused expecting a response.

"I'm ... don't care and i'm not kidnapping you, you are getting me to a ship and then you can come back here."

"That nice of you but how about some courtesy. This isn't exactly a fun time for me." hiccup said.

"I'm sorry I didn't think there was an etiquette for waking up on a strange island with no idea where you are and being completely surrounded by strangers." I said losing my breath at the end. I gestured for Hiccup to exit through the back door when there was loud creaking on the roof.

"What is that?" i asked with a tinge of fear in my voice.

"Thats just ... the wind ... its an old house and she's not so sturdy anymore." Hiccup said unconvincingly patting a wooden post.

I didn't believe him but the longer I stayed in the house the more likely it would be that I got caught.

"Move." I said directing him out the door.

He obliged and we exited the house. I stopped him just outside the doorway. "Okay we are heading for those trees." I pointed to the tree line where I came from.

"I thought you wanted a ship?" Hiccup asked.

I then entered my threatening posture and said "For your own good don't ever assume I'm that stupid again. There is no way I am walking right through the middle of your town to get to the docks."

The boy looked disappointed "This would be allot quicker if you were." I hit him in the gut.

"OW. I'm just ... saying ... what do you think is going to happen."

he said getting his breath back. "If you make it to the ocean and if you get a ship we will just come after you and get our ship back. You will be causing allot of people quite a bit of grief. Me being one of them."

"I don't think i'll be taking advice on how to escape from one the people who captured me" I retorted. "Now shut up and walk slowly towards the forrest like everything is normal."

"Your impossible" he said giving up and walking out towards the forrest. I quickly started walking next to him making sure I didn't look back for fear of looking too suspicious. Halfway between the house and the forest Hiccup walked ahead of me, turned around and dropped the bucket at his feet. He looked at me with his arms crossed. I was initially stunned that he had the guts to disobey me.

"What are you doing!?" I scolded him in a hushed tone.

"Giving you a chance to apologize." Hiccup said.

I didn't know what to say. What changed and how did he all of a sudden have this much courage to stand up to me.

I threatened him again "If you don't pick up that bucket right now and start walking i'm going to hit you over the head with it.". I of course couldn't do it because we could be watched right now.

"That wasn't an apology" he said staring me down.

This was scary. We were in the middle of a field so it was only a matter of time until someone spotted us. Secondly seeing someone so small make such a dominant claim was unsettling on so many levels. Obviously threatening wouldn't work any more so I gave in.

"Look i'm sorry I hit you and stuff but could you please stop making a scene and could we continue on" I pleaded.

"Apology accepted. Gently Toothless." Hiccup said.

"What did you call ..." I was knocked to the ground mid-sentence.

#### 4. Nameless

Something hit me in the back, hard. I fell past Hiccup and slid, face down, on the grass. Something heavy was on my back. I could hear Hiccup behind me say "Toothless! What part of that was gentle?"

His question was greeted with a loud purring noise. I tried getting up but the weight on my back was too heavy and it seemed to shift with me if I tried to roll out from under it.

Hiccup sighed "You dumb reptile. Alright ... flip her over."

Almost instantly the weight was lifted from back and a powerful force flipped me onto my back. Before I even registered what happened the weight was now on my shoulders pinning my to the ground once again and also trapping my arms. Looking up I saw a huge black dragon towering

over me. It's head cocked as it looked at me and it began sniffing my hair. I inhaled deeply as I was getting the breath to scream. Before I could Hiccup knelt down and cupped a hand over my mouth.

"Look" he said "I'm not going to have him get off you until I know you can be trusted"

I wasn't buying it and a whole string of profanities came out of my mouth that were muffled by his hand. Hiccup patiently waited for me to be out of breath and then asked

"Are you finished?"

My eyes moved back to the dragon. Hiccup sensed my fear and said "Oh he won't hurt you." He began to scratch the dragons chin and it closed its eyes obviously enjoying the scratching. My eyes darted between the dragons forelegs that were pinning me to the ground.

>Hiccup sensed what I was trying to convey and said "This is hardly worse than having your arm twisted behind your back." A smug smile had crept across his face. I shot him back a glare.<p>

"So are you calm yet?" Hiccup asked.

After several seconds of staring at the dragon apprehensively I nodded and Hiccup removed his hand.

"So first question" Hiccup started "Why were you in my house?"

I was lost in a trance, just starrng at the beast holding me down.

"Um, hello. You know it's going to be hard to determine if I can trust you if you can't talk" he said.

I snapped out of my trance and answered "I was dyeing of thirst. I needed to find some water without being seen."

Hiccup weighed my answer and then said "Ok that explains why one of the buckets was half empty. But why was there water all over the floor?"

"I was REALLY thirsty." I said. Hiccup gave a small huff of laughter.

"Second question" Hiccup asked again "Why were you so determined to get off this island."

"Are you kidding me!? To get away from the the weird people who brought me here and now I want to get away from your terrifying dragons as well."

The dragon growled as I said this. Could it hear me?

Hiccup talked to his dragon when he heard this "Toothless! Not helping bud."

The dragon huffed at his master and stopped growling.

"Third question" Hiccup asked "Do you think I can let you up without



you hurting anyone or running off?"

I was stunned again by his demeanor but saw an opportunity to get the upper hand. If he was this compassionate I could use that to get free. I started to fake cry "I'm just so scared Hiccup. I just want to go home" I balled.

Hiccup wasn't fooled and the dragon sensed something was amiss too because it turned its head towards Hiccup and gave what could best be described as shaking its head in disapproval.

"Really? After you almost tore my arm off inside you think i'm going to fall for that." Hiccup said.

"Oh come on. Let me up!" I yelled at him discarding my vulnerable attitude.

"Do you promise not to run away or hurt anyone? Yes or no?"

"Fine. I won't hurt anyone and I won't run but i'm not staying on this island!"

"Good enough. Toothless she's a friend now." Hiccup said making a few hand signals while talking. The dragon looked down at me and moved its forelegs that were holding me in position. Before it completely got off of me it licked my face once. The amount of saliva the was now on my clothes was incredible.

"Ugggg ..." I grimaced looked at the state of my clothing.

"It looks like he likes you." stated Hiccup making his way over to me.

"Well that makes one of us" I said as I glared over at the dragon. It glared right back at me.

I muttered to myself as I was shaking off some of the saliva "What did I expect from a bunch of viking savages."

Hiccup obviously heard this and explained "I know what you mean. Most of us aren't all that reasonable." He then extended a hand to help me up. At this point, sitting in the dirt, captured by a scrawny boy, and covered in saliva, my pride was non-existent so I accepted.

"Most of the people in this town are actually becoming quite level headed" he said. Just as I was about to grab his hand a spike flew though the air and caught my sleeve, staking my arm to the ground. I was tugging at the spike with my other hand and realized that I couldn't pull it free from the position I was in. I rolled over to see where the spike came from and I saw a viking girl with blond hair charging at me and screaming with an axe held up in the air. There was a blue and white dragon that she must have rode in on behind her. Hiccup stepped in between me and her and started talking.

"Astrid wait ...don't axe her ... she is not a threat". She ran up to Hiccup and tried to get around him and he blocked her every time she did.

"Hiccup! Get out of my way!" the girl screamed.

"What is going on over here!" boomed a voice from behind me. I saw both the girl and Hiccup freeze. Rolled back over and saw a huge man with a big red beard standing with his hands on his hips. Both Hiccup and the girl addressed the man at the same time but with different title.

The girl called him "Chief" and Hiccup called him "Dad".

The Chief looked down at my pinned arm and sighed saying "Astrid, when I left you in charge of all our new guests I wasn't thinking you would use her as a moving target for your dragon"

The girl looked stunned but she quickly retorted "She escaped out of Gothi's hut and ..."

"You decided to hunt her down with an axe for running away?" the Chief said sternly.

The girl looked ashamed no and was looking at the ground.

"Wait a second ..." said Hiccup confused about something "... since when is Astrid in charge of all new people that come to the island?".

"Since I was the only one who's vision wasn't clouded when Heather was on the island." the girl said quietly to Hiccup. The chief looked down at me and put a hand on the spike and rooted it out of the ground. Extending a hand down to me he asked "You alright lass". I didn't answer and he then noticed the cloth on the ground with bread in it and the bucket of water. "Now who's are those?"

I then stuttered an answer as I was intimidated by the hulking man "Well ... if Hiccup's your son ... then ... I guess ... they would be yours."

The man looked surprised and then burst out laughing "You were right to be worried about this one Astrid. Breaking into the chief's longhouse and stealing nothing but bread and water.". He gave a few more hearty chuckles and then said "Alright no more fighting 'ere. Astrid, Hiccup take 'er back up to Gothi's and 'ave 'er make sure our little water thief is completely all right. If she is bring 'er to the great hall"

The Chief departed still chuckling.

I looked back towards Hiccup and the girl. Hiccup was still looking in the direction of his departed father while the girl wound up and hit Hiccup in the back with the flat part of her axe.

"Don't embarrass me like that again Hiccup!" she screamed.

Hiccup, now on his knees, looked like he was about to say something in his defense but then thought better of it and just wheezed out a "Sorry ...".

Her attention was now turned to me and she said "Are you just going to stand their or are you going to move?"

"I don't know, are you going to put down the axe?" I said.

The girl smirked and then walked over to her dragon and put the axe in her saddle bags. Hiccup now recovering from his beating stood up and said "By the way that's Astrid and Stormfly."

"Which ones the dragon." I asked.

He replied "Stormfly".

"And which ones the gentle looking, winged, reptile?"

Hiccup started laughing at this until Astrid yelled over "I heard that!"

Hiccup then said "Come on we got to get you to Gothi's hut".

I stepped back apprehensively "You don't mean on a dragon do you?"

Astrid yelled over "Well we won't be walking!"

I backed away even more "There is no way i'm getting on the back of one of those things."

Hiccup mounted Toothless and gestured for me to join him.

"Come on it's a short flight and I can even tell Toothless to take it slow." he said.

I still wasn't convinced and kept my distance from the beasts.

Astrid had Stormfly trot over to me and said "It's okay if you don't want to ride on Toothless Stormfly can always carry you in her talons"

That was all it took I raced over to Toothless's side and accepted Hiccups help to get into the saddle.

"You might want to hold on to me." Hiccup said.

I scoffed and said "In your dreams".

Before I could even catch a breath we were speeding though the air. My arms quickly found their place wrapped around Hiccup squeezing him for dear life. I closed my eyes which was a bad idea because when we landed I was completely disoriented and almost fell off Gothi's porch again.

Inside I saw the old woman again. She was unsurprised by the fact that I was back. I sat on the bed where I had arisen from just hour before. Hiccup and Astrid made there way into the shack and I asked them "So how long was I here?".

Hiccup took a minute to think and then said "It took an hour to fly back from where I found you and after that ..." Gothi held up four fingers. Hiccup looked at her and continued "... and it was four hours until you woke up so five hours."

"What! It felt like days laying there." I said in shock.

"Oh ... I almost forgot what's your name." Hiccup said.

"Huh?" I was still lost in the fact that it had only been hours since I was lost at sea

"Unless your name really is 'Don't Care' you still haven't told me your name" Hiccup said

Astrid snickered at this. She seemed to enjoy anything that gave Hiccup a hard time.

"Oh my name is ..." I said. Wait why did I stop? "Sorry my name is ..." Again. Why couldn't I answer?

Astrid commented to Hiccup "Well thats not suspicious or anything."

The old woman had stopped checking me and was now looking at me too. Where was it? I tried to think into my past but all I could see was the crate. The girl in the water. Something about a baby in a crib. That was it!

"I don't know" I muttered. Everyone in the hut looked confused. Now I was scared more scared than when Toothless jumped on me.

"How can I not know?" I muttered as I started to cry.

## 5. Deal

I knew I was scaring everyone with my hysterics but I didn't care. I wanted my name. I never thought I would want anything so badly.

"Calm down" I heard someone in the hut say. It didn't matter who it was, this was a problem, a big problem and I was right to be upset.

I then made a list of all the names I had ever heard and muttered them to myself.

"Hiccup, Astrid, Toothless, Gothi, Stormfly, ...". That couldn't be it! What about other names that weren't mine. Names of friends, pets, or towns.

"Ok don't worry about your name for now. Where are you from?" Hiccup said trying to defuse the situation. Where was I from? I thought back again but I could only get as far as the crate in the sea.

"... or the names of your parents" Hiccup continued.

"Parents. Do I have parents?" I asked desperately wanting them to answer.

I just received a bunch of confused stares.

"I was on a crate in the ocean ... that means I must have been on a ship and the ship ... was sunk" Dread consumed my body as I contemplated if my parents were on that ship. "Did you see anyone

else in the ocean?" I asked Hiccup.

"No it was just you. Me and Toothless got a good look at the area and you were the only thing in the sea." He said. He started again in a tone that gave away that he was thinking hard about this "Besides, from the state of you when we found you you had be out there for days and you barely survived. If anyone else was out their it would be very likely they would be ...". He stopped himself from finishing what he was saying but I knew what he meant.

"... dead." I finished for him.

"Calm down" said Astrid in a harsh tone of voice "You might not even have any parents."

Hiccup shot her a look and she shrugged her shoulders.

"What if your right." I answered to both of their amazement "If I have no parents then no one is looking for me ..." I took a second to contemplate what that meant "... and if I can't remember were home is ... there is no way I can ever find my way back". I just sat there on the bed completely defeated.

"Alright that's it!" proclaimed Astrid from the corner of the hut "I'm not buying your little act so how about this; You tell us were to ship you off too and I won't hit you really, really, hard"

Gothi and Hiccup were waving her off me but she ignored them both. I just sat their in my grief on the bed.

"Hey I asked you ..." at that moment Astrid grabbed my arm and I lashed out like a wounded animal. I charged her and slammed her against a shelf along the back wall. I looked into her eye's with pure hatred pouring from me to her. The look in her eyes wasn't fear or anger, it was of utter surprise. My victory was short lived as my grief claimed me again and my anger melted. I then broke down crying and I realized I was now hugging Astrid. I just stood there for what seemed like hours sobbing into the shoulder of the dragon girl. Astrid was frozen stiffer than a statue. I expected her to shove me back and hit me a long time ago but she just stood there petrified.

"Hiccup, what do I do?" I heard Astrid say in a hushed tone.

"Wha' ... Jus' ... What do you mean?" Hiccup whispered back.

"I'm no good with this trust and feelings stuff. How do I get her to stop crying?" She whispered back.

"Just console her." he concluded.

"How do I do that?!" She snapped back at him.

Hiccup just gave up and walked up to us both. He put his hand on my back and said "Its going to be okay um ... you. I promise we are going to figure this out, okay?".

I released Astrid and nodded to him. I when back to the bed all cried out when Gothi had started scratching her staff in a dirt patch in the hut. Hiccup looked over and stared into the dirt with a quizzical

look on his face.

He then looked up and translated "Gothi says it is possible for someone to lose their memory if you have been very close to death." Hiccup then shot a look at Astrid and she shrugged and said "What?! I can believe that, she already convinced me."

"Will it ever come back?" I asked quietly. The old woman's face changed to a somber expression and she shook her head. The hut was quiet for a long time and I just looked at the ground.

After a few minutes Astrid spoke up and said "Well you could always look at the bright side". I looked up and saw that everyone was looking at Astrid as well.

Astrid was now a little nervous with everyone looking at her but she continued "I mean umm ... your ... before life might not have been ... all that great. Sooo ... now you can start a new life that could be better."

"Your right." I said and Hiccup turned around and looked at me with a shocked expression. "There's no point to being sad about losing what I don't even know I had in the first place" I concluded. I wiped what tears I had on my face away and turned to Gothi. "Am I okay to leave physically?"

The woman nodded with the somber expression still on her face.

"Well didn't the chief tell you to take me to the great hall after this?" I asked Hiccup and Astrid. They were both a little awkward around me but they eventually exited the door to the hut.

Astrid, Hiccup, and I were all standing on Gothi's porch when Hiccup stated "You know we don't have to head to the great hall right now. If you need a minute to collect your thoughts we can wait."

"Thanks I could use a minute." I said.

There was an awkward silence and then Toothless groaned obviously wanting to start flying. The sun was setting and it was almost ready to become night.

"He's actually pretty amazing when he's not pinning me to the ground" I commented to Hiccup.

"Ya he is." he paused and looked at me and then said "Here give me your hand". I was shocked by this but he just grabbed it and started pulling me closer to Toothless.

"Wha' ..." I started and then Hiccup interrupted me.

"It's alright. I told you before he won't hurt you." he said as he placed my hand near the dragon's snout. Toothless looked up at my hand for a bit and then moved into my hand, rubbing against it. I smiled and started to pet him. There was a kind of squawk from behind me. I turned around and saw Stormfly looking at Astrid. Astrid looked back at her dragon and gave a small nod. Stormfly walked across the porch and started sniffing me. I slowly put a hand close to the blue dragon's snout. It started to back away so I stopped moving my hand. The dragon then moved closer to my hand and eventually rubbed up

against it.

"Wow. You learn fast." Hiccup commented.

I then stopped petting Toothless and Stormfly. Then Stormfly waddled back to Astrid with a few excited squawks.

"Okay lets go." I said now happy.

Astrid got on Stormfly and took off without a word.

Hiccup then laughed and said "I think she is still in shock that you hugged her."

I blushed a little embarrassed that he brought that up.

He then changed his tone and said "Hey can you do something for me?".

"Umm maybe" I replied as he was getting up on Toothless.

"When we get to the great hall my fathers probably going to ask you to tell him about what you were doing when you woke up."

"And?" I prompted.

"And could you maybe leave out the part about you pinning me against a wall?"

I laughed at him.

"But the whole kidnapping part you are okay with me telling?" I jested, still laughing at him.

"Uh ... actually could you leave that part out as well?" he said lifting me into the saddle.

"Tell you what ..." I said calming down "... if i'm gonna be here until I find out where i'm from I better start thinking of my own reputation. If you and Astrid don't tell anyone about how I cried in her arms I will leave out the kidnapping and the beating."

Hiccup quickly accepted "Deal. I don't think I will even need to talk to Astrid. I don't think she would want to tell the story of the Fearless Astrid Hofferson frozen in fear of a crying girl."

After the deal was struck we took off and flew towards the great hall. We landed next to Stormfly and Astrid asked "What took you so long?"

"We were just talking some more." Hiccup said cautiously. I could tell that Astrid hated secrets being kept from her. As a result Hiccup shivered in fear as he walked past her into the great hall. All three of us walked down the long hall and to a table near the back where the chief sat.

## 6. Home

"Ho, Ho, it looks like the water thief is alright." the chief boomed

in a deep voice. A man sat next to him who had his left arm replaced with a hook and a peg leg was visible underneath the table. "This is my friend, and Hiccups mentor, Gobber." the chief stated.

The man spoke in a heavy accent "Wow, she's a pretty lass. I can see why you didn't show up at the forge eh Hiccup" he said jestingly but there was some subtle annoyance with Hiccup in his statement. Astrid growled behind me and then Gobber lost his smile immediately.

"So are you going to tell us your name lass?" the chief asked.

"I ... um ... actually kind of ... forgot it?" I tentatively replied.

The chief got a look on his face that was either confusion or anger. Either way I flinched as he said "What?!".

It was Astrid who then spoke up "Gothi says she could have lost her memory from being lost at sea for so long. She apparently can't even remember where she comes from or who her tribe is."

I looked back grateful to her and she just nodded. The chief looked me over with a skeptical look and then gestured for me to come forward.

"Let me have a look at that necklace you got" I looked down realized I had a necklace with a crest on it. I quickly passed it to him and he examined it thoroughly.

He then passed it over to Gobber and asked "Do you recognize that seal Gobber" he asked. I was scared half expecting him to say 'Yes it from our worst enemies tribe'.

"I'll check tomorrow in the Book of Seals if there is a match but i've never seen anything close to it." the blond peg legged viking said. He passed it back to the chief who in turn passed it back to me.

"Sorry lass but you are going to have to stay put for a while." the chief said. "You can call your home here for the time being. There are beds over in that corner so you can sleep and you are welcome to help yourself to the meals here in the great hall."

I nodded to him and said "Thank you".

I started to back away when the chief said "Before you go and rest I would like to hear the story of how you found yourself in my house this morning."

"Oh boy this aught to be a good one." said Gobber.

"I woke up in Gothi's hut and I didn't know where I was or how I got there so I was frightened." I started recalling the days events "I ran out of the hut and fell off the porch. I then ran into the forrest and made my way towards the town because I was so thirsty ..."

"Berk" the chief interjected.

I nodded and continued "Yes ... Berk and then I got to the tree-line



and your house was the closest and most isolated so I snuck in through the backdoor. I found some water and bread in there. I heard the door opening and I ..." I suddenly remembered my deal with Hiccup and then continued "... I ducked out the back. Toothless caught me and Hiccup asked me what I was doing and if he could trust me not to run off. Then Astrid showed up and I guess you were there for that bit."

Astrid made a small noise behind me and I knew she noticed that there was no way I could have slipped out the back at that time because she was just departing to check at Gothi's hut.

However the chief accepted this story and then asked "What were you going to do if you didn't get caught?".

"I was going to ... steal a ship" I timidly stated, thinking I would spark the huge man's wrath.

"You can sail on your own?" he asked.

"I ..." I started but then I realized I had no memories of sailing "I ... Think I can? Maybe."

The chief noticed that I was struggling to think so he said "Alright, go and get some food and rest lass we will see if that seal shows up in the Book of Seals tomorrow morning."

I turned around and looked at Hiccup and Astrid and Hiccup said "We are gonna get something to eat so do you want to join us or are you too tired."

"Thanks i'm starving" I replied.

As we were walking away from the chiefs table Astrid had a puzzled look on her face. It quickly turned into a smile and a smirk.

Hiccup noticed this and asked "Why are you so happy"

She turned to me and said "You beat him up didn't you?"

Hiccup replied stuttering "No! I mean what are you ... talking about ... Astrid. Beat who up?".

"How did you do it?" asked Astrid with a big smile on her face.

As Astrid already seemed to know so I responded quiet enough so that the chief wouldn't hear "I ... um ... hit him into the wall and twisted his arm behind his back."

"Awesome" Astrid cooed.

I could see she enjoyed this talk so I added "Even got him to carry the bucket for me until Toothless caught me."

This got Astrid laughing.

"Hey what happened to our deal?" Hiccup asked, rather perturbed.

Before I could answer Astrid said "And you tried to cover it up?".

Astrid was in hysterics now.

"I should be asking you. You practically told her everything when you tried to deny it" I answered Hiccup's earlier question.

Astrid, now drunk with laughter, gave an impression of Hiccup denying Astrid previous question.

"I didn't tell your father and besides Astrid's is part of the deal so no one else will know." I said trying to put the matter to rest.

Astrid had just started to come down from her laughing spree when she said "Ahh ... wait i'm not in on any deal?"

"Ya Hiccup said that you wouldn't want the story told of how 'The Fearless Astrid Hofferson was petrified in fear from a hug' ".

"That ... that ... that was NOT fear ... I was just ..." Astrid stumbled though her words and I cut her off.

"Sounds like fear to me. Like I said, your in on it. If none of us tell those two stories no one's reputation will take a hit." I said smugly.

Hiccup added to the ploy too by saying "And do you really want Snotlout to know about that."

Astrid mumbled some things under he breath but eventually blurted out "Fine".

We grabbed some chicken and bread and sat down at a table on the other side of the room for some reason.

"Why did we come all the way over here to sit down?" I asked.

"Well this is the table where all the Berk teens sit" Hiccup explained.

"Why?" I asked again.

"Didn't you have a favorite seat when you were back in ... oh ... right." Astrid said trailing off at the end.

## 7. Freya

Freya

Before anyone had a chance to talk again a group of teens entered the great hall. Two of them rushed over seeing that I was with Astrid and Hiccup. The almost looked identical but there were small traces of masculinity and femininity between them both. They immediately started tag-teaming me with question.

"Are you the crate girl?"

"Was your ship in a battle?"

"Did it explode?"

"How many ships where in this battle?"

"How big was the explosion?"

Hiccup now intervened and said "Guys, Guy, Guys. We don't know what happened to her ship. This is ... um ... well the thing is that she doesn't ...".

I finished his sentence for him "I lost all my memory of my life before I was lost at sea, even my name."

"Whoa!"

"Thats so cool!"

"I wish I lost my memory. Then I wouldn't remember my sisters ugly face."

He got hit by the other one for his comment.

Astrid then got a mischievous look on her face and said "You know Gothi said losing your memory came from getting hit in the head over and over."

"Really!" they both cooed together. They then both started to hit each other in the head and the odd part was each of them were egging the other one to hit them harder.

"So ... thats Ruffnut and Tuffnut, the twins." Hiccup said.

"An you may call me Snotlout the Destroyer, my lady." said a burley teen who had grabbed my hand and was attempting to kiss it. I pulled it out off his clutches and Astrid spoke up.

"The only thing you have ever destroyed was your own pants" Astrid said and upon hearing this the twins chuckled, still trying to knock the memory out of each other. Snotlout sat down opposite Astrid and I shuffled down the table away from him.

Snotlout replied in his smug voice "Do I hear some jealousy in that heavenly voice Astrid?" Astrid kicked Snotlout under the table and he grabbed his knee in pain.

"There, that's how you destroy something Snotlout. Now maybe you can earn that title." Astrid yelled across the table.

"Thanks for the advice" Snotlout wheezed, obviously in pain.

Then Hiccup pointed to the last boy and said "And thats Fishlegs". I was completely taken aback by his simple "Hello" greeting after the entrance the others had made.

"What's your name, I missed it" asked Fishlegs.

Hiccup looked annoyed and then spoke up loudly "Ok everyone listen up so I can get you up to speed" everyone was quite and the twins even stopped hitting each other. "I found her bobbing on a crate at sea this morning and I brought her back to Gothi's. Gothi healed her and woke up, got freaked out and ended up breaking into my house to get

water. Toothless eventually caught her and me and Astrid took her back to Gothi's and then we found out that she has no memory of anything that happened before being stuck on that crate." Hiccup finished out of breath.

All the other teens, except astrid of course, had a look of awe on their faces.

Snotlout spoke up and asked "So what's her name?".

Hiccup looked really annoyed at this but calmly explained "She would have been named at birth and since that obviously happened before she was lost at sea she doesn't remember."

"I have a question" said Tuffnut with his hand raised.

"Yes Tuff" responded Hiccup, now looking utterly defeated.

"Why did she go to your house to get water? Why wouldn't she just go to the well?" he asked.

Hiccup couldn't respond to this and just stared at Tuff.

I then spoke up and said "Have you ever NOT been caught when you were doing something you weren't supposed to be doing?".

"Ah ... no"

"Whats the point of doing something bad if no one knows you did it?" the twins replied.

Hiccup then saw that Fishlegs had his hand up and whined "Noooo. Come on. Not you too Fishlegs ... what is it."

"If she doesn't know her name shouldn't we give her one so we can call her something other than ... you know ... her?" the boy said timidly.

"Thank you Fishlegs for asking a good question." Hiccup said relieved. Hiccup paused and looked at me "I guess it would be up to you. What name would you like to go by?".

"Um I would love a name but the only names I know are your names and two dragon names so i'll need some help." I said.

"How about AstridTwo" Snotlout said and then Astrid kicked him in the other knee "OUCH! Or not."

Then Tuff said "Oh. Oh. How about Bob.". Everyone looked at him blankly but he continued "Get it because you were bobbing out in the ocean". More blank stares. "No ... not feeling it ... okay".

Hiccup then spoke up and said "There are quite a few common names we have for girl here there are: Fasta, Borga, Bersa, Edda, and the only other one I can think of, right now, is Freya but thats ...".

I interrupted him and said "Wait. Freya kind of sounds familiar? I don't remember ever hearing it before but it's kind of ... reminds me of home. Wherever that is."

Astrid spoke up and said "That's because it's the name of the god of beauty and ... well ... a few other things. You probably prayed to her in your before-life."

I was a little embarrassed "Oh ... well I should probably ... pick a different ...".

Hiccup cut me off "No if it's familiar to you then that's probably a great name. If you picked another name it could take you a while to realize that we are actually talking to you when we use it."

Fishlegs spoke up and said "Freya's a great name."

Soon after Snotlout agreed and the twins just shrugged and said "We still think Bob is better but I guess Freya's cool".

"Um ... Okay ... I Guess." I stated.

"Welcome to Berk Freya" said Hiccup.

There was a bunch of different conversations after that that I didn't really partake in that much. During the conversations I noticed Astrid glaring at me. I knew what it was about and I put on my best 'I'm sorry' look. Suddenly her smirk grew across her face and it looked like she forgave me but that didn't put my mind at ease at all.

I cringed when she got up to make toast "Everyone let's give three cheers for our new friend Freya the Forgetful."

Everyone burst out laughing and they even started chanting the title. I slumped back in my seat and thought to myself 'I would have preferred "Freya the Water Thief" '. Soon after everyone was going and Astrid and Hiccup were the last to go.

I just looked at Astrid with a look of annoyance and she replied by saying "What!? You don't get a name like Freya without their being some strings attached."

She looked over at Hiccup and said "Oh thank you for reminding me." Astrid walked up to him, wound up, and hit him in the shoulder harder than she hit him with the axe earlier.

"What was that for!" Hiccup yelled.

"You know what you did!" Astrid said walking by him.

"Do you know what this is about Freya?" Hiccup asked.

"Yes and you deserved it." I said.

"How!?" he asked, still rubbing his shoulder.

"You got off easy. I can guarantee you that welt will go away faster than the title 'The Forgetful' " I scolded.

Astrid was still within earshot of this and said "Oh he's not off the hook just yet."

"Please Astrid my arm can't take much more of this." pleaded Hiccup but she just smirked and walked away, hauntingly saying "See you tomorrow Hiccup" as she left.

"I still don't understand why." he said as he sauntered away.

I was now alone so I made my way over to the beds in the corner and took off the necessary clothing. I got under the covers and put my head on the pillow. With my eyes closed I muttered "Freya". "Not bad" I then put my mind to rest and fell asleep.

**\*\*Authors note:** I originally planned this scene out for both the male and female gender before I decided to write just the female perspective. So if your a guy and your not really associating yourself with the main character because she is a girl, the name for Freya the Forgetful's male counter part would be Thor the Thoughtless. The scene would progress like it did, only this time Snotlout would be the one upset and would say things like "I'm stronger than him! If anything I should be named Thor!"(as Thor is the god of strength and other things). Because most people in the group dislike Snotlout and they see this bothers him they then back the name more strongly. Snotlout then murmurs some disingenuous words including 'thoughtless'. Ruff picks up the word thoughtless and gives you your title. During the chanting and laughing Snotlout tries to convince everyone it was his idea and everyone ignores him. **\*\***

**\*\*So if you are having trouble associating with Freya feel free to think Thor the Thoughtless every time you see her name.\*\***

## 8. Seal

I didn't dream that night. What would I dream of? I had only had a handful of experiences in my new life and so the night just slipped away and I was awoken the next morning. The sun crept through the cracks in the wooden planks that made the front wall of the Great Hall. The sunlight poured through and found its way to where I was sleeping. Golden rays of light caressed my face and I sighed and readjusted myself, not wanting to get up just yet. I then heard another sigh not that far from me. I slowly opened my eyes and saw Snotlout's face right in front of mine.

"Hello my beautiful goddess of ... uh ... beauty" Snotlout said. I was still groggy from sleeping but I opened my eyes fully to see what was going on. Snotlout was on my bed, laying on top of the covers, and flexing his mussels. I screamed and reacted hitting him in the face.

Snotlout fell out of my bed and hit the stone floor. He ran off yelling "Your lucky I don't hit girls."

Now that I was startled away I saw Astrid entering the great hall. Snotlout ran past her and she could see that he was holding his nose. She closed the distance between us and asked "What happened there?".

I replied slightly shocked "He was laying on my bed when I woke up!".

She replied in an disapproving manner "And you hit him for that! What

is wrong with you?"

"Wha' ... I ... he ... I couldn't" I stuttered shocked that she was taking his side.

As I fumbled with my words a smile grew on Astrid's face.

After she let me stutter for a while she said "Freya! Calm down. I'm messing with you. If anything you should have hit him harder."

It took me a second to remember that when she said 'Freya' it was addressing me.

Astrid noticed my blank stare and said jokingly "Hello you still in there. You didn't lose your memory again did you?"

"No it just took me a second to remember my name is 'Freya' " I said, getting out of bed and putting on the clothes I took off the previous night.

"Did you forget your title too?" Astrid said smugly.

I just shot her a look and she chuckled.

I was now completely dressed and I walked towards Astrid saying "You know, for someone who gets enjoyment out of watching Hiccup suffer you seem to have an odd interest in what subtle comments he makes, if it was even intentional, about me."

"I don't enjoy watching him suffer." said Astrid as we walked towards the great halls entrance together.

"Really ..." I said with a disapproving look.

"I don't ... it's just that ever since he killed the Red Death Hiccups ... well he hasn't been Hiccup." Astrid explained.

"Whats a Red Death?" I asked.

"A really big dragon that was controlling the other smaller dragons. Anyway he went from Hiccup the Useless to Hiccup the Dragon Conquerer and it sometimes gets to his head. So every time he gets a little to ... well ... 'Snotlouty' I take it upon myself to make sure he remembers he's Hiccup." she explained.

"Well I can see why you don't want another Snotlout around here but that only answered half of my question." I pried.

"Nope I think that was all you wanted to hear, right." Astrid said in an intimidating tone.

"Oh ... I guess it was." I responded, trying to avoid further confrontation.

"Anyway Gobber sent me to get you and send you to the forge?" Astrid said.

"Gobber? Wait did he find out where this seal was from?!" I asked excitedly.

"Maybe. He just asked me to tell you to head to the forge." Astrid said, my excitement rubbing off on her.

I started running into the town and then stopped and turned to ask Astrid "Which way?".

"On the opposite side of the well to Hiccups house." she informed me.

I was grateful and would have thanked her if my excitement hadn't outweighed my appreciation. I ran down the steps from the great hall and saw the forge right where Astrid had described it to be. I saw the big, peg-legged Gobber sharpening a sword on a whetstone. I ran up to him and interrupted him in what he was doing. I knew it was rude but I wanted to find out who I was at last.

"Did you find out where my seal is from?" I sharply asked as he was still getting over the shock my interruption.

"Whatcha! Didn't anyone ever tell you not to startle a man with a sword in his hand!" he yelled at me.

"No" I said, rather nonchalantly.

"Oh ... right" he said and went back to his metalwork.

I was mad that he forgot my question so I interrupted his work again "Did you find my seal?".

The man suddenly remembered that he had searched for my seal and said "Oh ... right the seal.". He scratched his head with his prosthetic hook and said "So thats why I called you hear. I remember now." He again ignored me and went back to sharpening his sword.

I was so furious at his absent mindedness I grabbed the sword from him and pointed it at him. I screamed at him "IF YOU DON'T TELL ME WHAT YOU FOUND ABOUT MY SEAL RIGHT NOW I'M GONNA MAKE YOU WISH HADEN'T SHARPENED THIS AT ALL!"

The man looked unperturbed and inspected me.

"Good posture. Strait sword arm." he observed.

I grabbed the sword with both my hands and brought it back it back for a swing. I tried swinging it forward but it was stuck. I tried wrenching it free and then a a deep voice came from behind me "Thats enough lass!". I cringed and turned my head to see the chief holding the flat edge of the sword with one hand.

## 9. Tests

"Gobber what are you doing?" the chief asked. I was about to beg for forgiveness when I finally registered that he was talking to Gobber.

"I'm finding out what skills she's got, like ya told me to." Gobber asked with his eyes still on me.

"I was talking about not telling her about the seal." the chief



explained.

"Well you can't swing a sword properly if your not angry." Gobber concluded.

"What ... is going on." I said, out of breath from screaming at Gobber.

The Chief then turned around and said "You had better put the sword down and take a seat." as he gestured towards the anvil.

"You can keep the sword if ya want. Your not going to cause any damage with that grip." Gobber said with a short chuckle.

I looked at my hand and said rather insulted "I know that! I wasn't going to slice you with the edge for ignoring me." and I readjusted my grip as a demonstration.

Gobber looked at me nodded "Good with a sword. Short tempered but doesn't go too far off the deep end when your buttons are pushed. Rules at least a few places out." he said now turning to the chief.

"What!" I stated, utterly confused and emotionally drained. The chief gestured to the anvil and I walked over dragging the sword on the ground and sat listening, desperate for answers.

The Chief started up with his deep voice "I'm sorry but Gobber and I looked through that book several times and your seal was not in it."

My heart sank. That was it. That was my only connection to my past and it didn't lead anywhere. A look of disparity came across my face. I just stared at the floor of the blacksmiths with everything dulling and muffling around me.

A voice cut through my shroud of desperation. It was the Chief's and he said "We talked to Gothi about your condition and she had an idea of how we might still be able to find your tribe."

My head perked up. I had a feeling I had never been so devoutly paying attention to someone as I was now with the Chief.

"How?" I asked.

"Gothi noticed that you didn't forget 'ow to walk or talk when you woke up so she thought that you might 'ave other skills that might give us a clue about where you are from. For example, as Gobber just got you to show, you know how to 'andle weapons which rules out a few tribes that we know of that don't let their women use weapons."

An idea just came into my head as they mentioned other tribes.

I spoke up and asked "If you have relations with other tribes can't you just ask if anyone from their knows me?"

Both of them started laughing. I didn't get what was funny. The chief then boomed "If I sent a message to every tribe saying that we 'ave a 15 year old girl who can't remember what tribe she belongs to or who 'er family is, they would all take advantage and 'alf of the return

messages would be declarations of war for 'kidnapping' the daughter of their tribes chief and the other 'alf would claim you were engaged to their sons."

Gobber commented "Vikings don't share too well so we never say something doesn't belong to us. Until we know for sure what tribe you come from you are a Berkian to the rest of the world."

"They would really all claim me as their own?" I asked.

"Aye. I once saw two vikings almost fight to the death for a moldy sandwich no one claimed." said Gobber. I was a little angry that I had been so easily compared to a moldy sandwich but I quickly shrugged it off.

There was a slight pause and then the chief said "So. Gobber's going to take you around the island and see what you can do. 'opefully by the end of today there will be only one place you could be from."

The chief then walked away and I was left with Gobber in the forge.

"So shall we get started then?" Gobber stood up and grabbed a strip of cloth.

He moved over to me and I said in alarm "Wait. What are you doing?".

"Now that you know i'm testing you, you won't be able to show your skills. It has to be on instinct." Gobber said trying to blindfold me with the cloth.

I shoved him off and said "I think I can do just fine anyways."

Gobber looked annoyed and said "Really. Now tell me the proper stance to have while holding a sword?".

"Well you just ..." I started. I tried to think back to my lessons. Wait, did I have lessons? The more I thought about my past the more my grip loosened on the sword. Gobber seemed to sense this and grabbed a mace from the assorted weapons around the forge and hit the sword out of my hand.

"My point exactly. Stoick couldn't even pull that sword from your hand a minute ago when you were acting on instinct. Now your grip is weaker than my frail old aunties tea." he pointed out. I didn't like it but he had a point. I had one more protest that I had to try before I let him blindfold me.

"Stoick said you had to take me around the island. How can I do that if i'm blindfolded?" I protested, half knowing what he was going to say.

"I'll guide you lass. Don't worry about a thing." he responded.

"Oh i'm just instilled with confidence." I said as I let him blindfold me. The next several minutes were very disorienting to say the least. Even trying to peer out the sides of the blindfold and

using my ears to try to place where we were, I was still overwhelmed by the sounds of dragon roars, viking laughs and grunts, and the odd quizzical grunt of surrounding vikings, obviously wondering why there was a blindfolded teen being led through the streets by Gobber. All the sounds and the constant turning was beginning to make me feel sick when we finally stopped and waited in one place for a while. Gobber then untied my blindfold and my eyes adjusted to the daylight.

"Hopefully you do actually know how to sail because those shoals up ahead don't look too inviting." said Gobber. I was confused until I got a sense of my surroundings. I was on a ship at full sail headed strait for a bunch of jagged looking rocks sticking up out of the water. I panicked and looked for Gobber. He was lounging on the side of the ship nonchalantly.

"Do something!" I yelled at him.

"I don't know how to sail a ship lass. The crew that did, jumped off when I cut that rope over there." Gobber said as he gestured to both a rope swaying uselessly in the wind a bunch of black dots in the water behind the boat.

I rushed to the ropes attaching the sail to the ship and I spilled the wind from the sails. Were still going to fast so I moved to the rudder control. The rope that Gobber cut was the connecting line from the rudder to the control and so the control was useless. I stood for a second contemplating jumping overboard like the sailors did. I shuddered at the thought. I had had my fill of being stuck in the ocean and I did not want to abandon ship just yet. I looked around and noticed there was a hatch that would lead into the cargo hold. I yelled at the still lounging Gobber "GET YOUR USELESS TROLL HIDE BELOW DECK".

He acknowledge this and we both headed into the cargo hold. The connecting line was still connected to the rudder but was limp and laying uselessly on the floor. I yelled at Gobber again "Grab that rope and pull!".

He did and I did the same. Soon after the ship started to turn and slow down significantly.

I let out a long sigh and Gobber pulled out a notebook and said "Sailing check.".

I wound up and took a swing at him while letting out a string of curses. He expected this and picked me up by the scruff of my clothes and held me at bay.

After a bit of incoherent cursing I yelled "YOU COULD HAVE KILLED US!".

He replied "There was no other way for you to show you could sail.".

"What if I didn't know how too?" I asked.

"Well ... then ..." he stammered.

"We would have been torn to pieces in the shoals!" I concluded for

him.

"Your not looking on the bright side. We just narrowed down where you could be from by quite bit actually." he said.

"What's the point of finding out where i'm from if it kills me!?" I yelled still angry.

"If you don't like my way of doing thing we can always stop. We don't have to find out where your from if you don't want to." he said coaxing his expected response out of me.

I sighed and he took that as a 'let's continue'. Now we were on the deck and Gobber leaned off the side of the ship and looked at the shoals whistling and saying "Close one".

"So what are you going to do now?" he asked.

I took this opportunity to push him off the side of the ship. When he resurfaced I said "Since your already in the water, YOU are going to replace the connecting line around the rudder.". I threw a rope down at him and then continued "Then we are going to pick up the men that jumped overboard.".

"Right!" Gobber said "I'd almost forgotten about them.".

As soon as the ship was repaired we sailed back to Berks port, while picking up the stranded sailors on the way. As soon as we got off the ship Gobber stopped me pulled out the blindfold again.

I sighed "If we end up in the middle of nowhere again and I have to save us, your finding your own way back." I said as I let him blindfold me again. I was pushed through the streets again and became completely disoriented. Once again I stopped and waited some time for Gobber to remove my blindfold. Before it was I heard a familiar voice saying "I still don't understand why you need Meatlug and all this rope.".

"Fishlegs!?" I called out, still blinded.

"Hi Freya." replied Fishlegs.

"Freya?" asked Gobber.

"Ya it's the name she chose last night so we can call her something other than ... her." Fishlegs answered.

"All that time we had walking through the streets and on the ship and you didn't once think to tell me your new name. I'm a little hurt ... Freya." Gobber said, still adjusting to the name.

"If you don't take this blindfold off me soon, your going to be hurting a lot more!" I threatened.

Soon after that I felt something attach to my leg and then the blindfold came off. My leg was attached to a rope. I followed the long rope through all of it twists and turns and saw that it was fead through two pulleys attached to a tree. The end of the rope was attached to a big, wide, green Dragon with a mace-like tail.

I stared at the dragon for a bit before Fishlegs said "Oh I haven't introduced the two of you yet. Meatlug this is Freya. Freya, Meatlug.". The Dragon just scratched itself and Fishlegs went up to it and gave it a hug. "Meatlug is the sweetest most caring Dragon there is. Yes you are." the boy said as he proceeded to baby talk to his dragon.

"What is this?" I asked Gobber.

"Well I took into consideration you not wanting to die while finding out where your from and made this. If you can't do this you will only walk away with several broken bones ... probably." he said walking over to the Dragon.

"You have a bola and a bow choose wisely." he said and then he gave the Dragon a smack causing it to fly high into the air to get away from him. The rope started shortening and I grabbed the bow and notched an arrow. I pulled back and fired at the section of the rope between the two pulleys. The arrow barely traveled anywhere and stuck into the ground a few feet from me. There was barely any rope left and I notched another arrow. I was then pulled off my feet by the rope as it became tight. Sliding along the ground I pulled back the bowstring aimed and let the arrow fly. I stopped moving. The arrow severed the rope and the severed part moved up through the pulleys and dangled under the flying dragon.

Fishlegs ran after the dragon screaming "Meatlug come back! Gobber didn't mean it!"

"Bow skills check" said Gobber looking in his book again. I was getting very annoyed with Gobbers way of doing things and I got up and ran over to the bola and threw it at him. The three round weights rotated in the air and then wrapped around Gobber tangling his limbs in a mess of ropes.

"Bola skills check" I mocked.

"Get me out of here Freya." Gobber yelled at me.

"I'd love too Gobber but it's not instinctual anymore. I wouldn't know what to do with the ropes." I lied. "You know what, it's lunch time and i'm getting hungry so i'm going to go to the Great Hall to get some food. I'll bring someone back that will know what to do about the ropes." I said as I headed to the Great Hall. On my way over there I fantasized about who I might have been before, based on what skills I had found out I had. Was I a pirate? Using my sailing skills to find ships and then take them over with a sword and a bow. Or was I a hunter? Sailing from island to island in search of rare game to hunt with my bow or trap with my bola. I snapped out of my fantasy when I entered the gates of the Great Hall. I saw all the Berk teens, except Fishlegs, at their table and I grabbed my food and walked over to them.

## 10. Insane

While walking over to them, none of them noticed me until I sat down.

"Hey Freya the Forgetful actually remembered where our table is."

announced Astrid and the entire table gave a small cheer.

"My lady" Snotlout said giving a small bow in his seat.

"Hey Snotlout, how's your nose?" I said in jest but he took it as genuine concern.

"So grateful for your concern sweet Freya" he said with a smile on his face.

I decided to play along until I got a good opportunity.

"I just feel so bad for how I acted this morning. Is there anything I can do to make your nose feel better?" I played, hoping he would fall for it.

"I could never be hurt by a girl, but if you want to make it up to me ..." he said leaning across the table with his eyes closed and lips puckered.

"Oh of course I want to make it up to you Snotlout" I cooed, unable to believe how he fell for it. With Snotlout unaware I emptied my tray onto Astrid's, who was beside me, and slammed the tray into Snotlout's puckering lips. He fell backwards off the table's bench and everyone, even people at other tables, started laughing at him. I set down my tray and retrieved what I had dumped on Astrid's tray and sat down beside her. Surprisingly Tuff wasn't laughing and had a confused look on his face.

"I don't get it. How are you two going to kiss if Snotlout's all the way down there?" he said genuinely confused.

I turned to Astrid and asked "Should I even bother explaining?"

"Nah. He would probably forget what happened before you finished." Astrid answered.

"Forget what? Hey why is Snotlout all the way down there? Tuff said absentmindedly.

When everyone had calmed down and Snotlout was back on his seat Hiccup asked "So did Gobber find out what tribe that seal belongs to?" asked Hiccup.

I shook my head and simultaneously said "No. But Gothi thinks I still have my skills from whatever life I had before, so Gobber's creating all these tests to see what skills I have."

"And?" asked Astrid.

"What?" I asked in response to her question.

"What can you do?" asked Hiccup for the whole table. I looked up and saw everyone paying attention to me. I didn't think the extent of my skills would be that interesting to them.

"Um ... well ... So far it looks like I can sail, shoot a bow, throw a bola, and Gobber said I was good with a sword." I stated. All the teens choked on their food or drink and then Astrid slammed her mug

down on the table.

"What did you say?!" Astrid yelled.

"Astrid i'm sure Gobber was more ... accommodating ... with his words ... because she is ..." Hiccup was desperately trying to defuse the situation.

"Quite Hiccup!" Astrid snapped at him. I looked around the table and all the other teens were looking in different directions away from Astrid and me. "Now what were his words exactly!" she asked with fire burning in her eyes.

"He said I had good posture and a strait sword arm but then he said my grip was so bad I couldn't hurt anyone with a sword" I said defensively, neglecting to tell the part where I improved my grip.

"Ok ... thats fine then." Astrid said calming down to my relief.

After a minute Ruffnut, who was on the other side of me to Astrid, leaned over. She whispered "In case you didn't notice Astrid really sucks with the sword."

She obviously didn't whisper quite enough because Astrid screamed "I DON'T ..." she then quieted down to a normal volume "... suck with a sword I just ... got so good with the axe, the sword became irrelevant."

All the teens nodded realizing it was far less frightening to stroke her ego than to comment on the merits of swords over axes.

Hiccup then asked "By the way where is Gobber or Fishlegs for that matter? Neither one of them is likely to miss a meal."

"Fishlegs is chasing down Meatlug and Gobber is tied up ... with doing something in town." I answered. Before they had a chance to ask me how I knew where Fishlegs was I pointed to both Astrid and Hiccup and said "It would have been nice of you two to warn me when I met Gobber the other day. All it would have taken would be 'By the way that Gobber guy you just met, ya he's INSANE' ".

The teens started chuckling amongst themselves and started asking one by one:

"What did he throw you into the arena with a wild dragon?" said the Twins.

"Make you train on top of an Iceberg at night?" asked Astrid

"Make you hold a shield, as a target, to test if a crossbows sights were aligned." said Hiccup.

"Make you carry a thousand rocks back to town because he thought they were all troll droppings." said Snotlout.

Everyone looked at Snotlout and the laughter started anew.

After it died down I explained "He cut the rudder line of our ship

while it was sailing strait for shoals and tied my leg to Meatlug before he scared him away."

The twins then perked up and started asking "Did the ship get destroyed?"

"Did anyone get hurt?"

"No the ship and the sailors are fine." I said something weighing on my mind.

After enough time had passed I timidly asked "Did any of you ever think about ... you know ... not doing what Gobber asked you or ... hypothetically ... trap him with a bola and leave him laying in a field?"

"No ones ever been crazy or stupid enough to cross Gobber. Not even the twins" stated Snotlout.

"Ya. Wait ..." stated Tuffnut.

He and both the twins started bickering while Astrid and Hiccup picked up on the specific nature of the question.

"Freya did you ..." Astrid asked but was cut off by a loud yell from the entrance to the Great Hall.

"FREYAAAA!" boomed Gobber from the Great Hall's entrance.

## 11. Enigma

### Enigma

Gobber must have hopped or rolled here because he was still trapped in the bola ropes. All the occupants of the Great Hall looked over at Gobber and burst out laughing; All except for me and Gobber.

"Someone get me out of this thing!" Gobber roared.

Immediately the person sitting closest to the entrance got up and used their knife to cut the ropes. I tried to hunker down in hopes that the sea of people would hide me. It didn't work as I heard the tap of Gobbers peg-leg getting louder and more frequent as he was moving determinedly towards me. I cringed closing my eye's and praying he had a good sense of humor. I felt the cold metal of Gobbers hook hand touch the back of my neck and then I was wrenched from my seat. He had secured the back scruff of my clothing and I was just dangling off of his hook hand in the middle of the Great Hall. I slowly opened my eyes to see a furious Gobber staring right at me.

"Um ... hi ... Gobber ... I know this might not mean that much to you right now but ... I would just like to tell you ... that I am very ... very ... sorry for leaving you there." I said as calmly as I could.

"What's there to be sorry about? I thought you couldn't free me 'cause you weren't acting on instinct?" Gobber said, almost bursting



at the seams from suppressing his rage.

I couldn't say anything else. I was petrified and I felt I couldn't say anything that would help my situation. Suddenly, Gobber set me down and unsheathed his hook from the scruff of my shirt.

"What are you doing?" I asked as I was fully expecting him to carry me off to do some horrible punishment.

"WE still have some tests to do, FREYA." he said scoldingly, pulling out the blindfold again.

I just stood there and let him secure the blindfold, thinking that even making the slightest movement would send him over the edge. We started moving again only now I could determine something about my surroundings. We were being followed by the entirety of the Great Hall's former occupants. Once again I was left in one spot and Gobber left to set up the test. I could hear the roaring and talking of the crowd we had drawn.

Unlike before Gobber said to me "Ok take your blindfold off.". I tentatively took off the blindfold and observed my surroundings. I was standing in a stone arena with metal chains laid out like a spiders web over the top. All around the ring were vikings cheering for some reason. I looked behind me and saw a metal gate blocking my way to the exit ramp.

I suddenly heard Gobbers voice in the crowd talking to someone "Don't worry about the dragons Hiccup, she's only got a wea mace and a shield. This isn't anything different than your first day in dragon training.".

"I'm not worried about the dragons and yes this is plenty different Gobber. When we were in dragon training there were six of us against one dragon. On top of that we had all been around dragons for years. We don't even know if she had seen a dragon before yesterday." Hiccup argued.

"Yes and that is one of the questions your father charged me ..." he paused for a moment and gestured to himself "... to find out.". Without anymore words Gobber pulled a lever and the log that was securing a cage in the side of the arena was lifted. Soon after, the doors burst open and huge, two headed, green dragon burst out. The dragon walked into the arena, without seeming to care I was in it, and then the vikings started hitting the chains on top of the arena.

The dragon started flinching at the noise and then started to roar. I looked for somewhere to hide but the ring was empty apart from me, the dragon, and a mace and shield placed at my feet. I grabbed the weapons and the dragon whipped it heads around to look at me. I stood with my shield at the ready and my mace raised. I hoped that any minute my instincts would take over. One of the heads snapped at me and I just raised my shield. The snap was a warning and it just fell short of the shield. I swung the mace and hit the head in one of it's horns. It looked confused for a second and then head-butted into me. I fell back against the gate that cut off access to the ramp. I quickly got up before the dragon could make a second attack. I ran under the arch of one of their necks and the dragon quickly turned to face me. It's right head breathed some green gas out. The green gas

fell harmlessly around me.

"I guess your not so ..." I started when a spark erupted from the left head. The gas immediately ignited and I was thrown back against the wall of the arena. I might have been knocked out for a second but I was really unsure. What I did know was that I was slumped over against the wall and the dragon was moving towards me.

I could hear the the twins in the crowd saying "Go Barf and Belch!". I got enough of my senses back to look up and the dragon was close to me now. It moved both it's heads close to me and started growling. I then remembered what Hiccup had shown me yesterday. I let go of my mace and shield and reached out touching the dragons snouts. The growls turned into a soft purr. I then noticed that the entire arena became silent. Continued petting the dragons heads and I scratched under it's chins. The dragon then purred louder than before and then stood me up on the wall. The gate soon opened to the ramp and Hiccup and Gobber came running down the ramp. Hiccup coaxed the Dragon back to its pen and Gobber stood before me and said "That was a horrible display on how to fight a dragon.".

I gave a single laugh and said, standing against the wall for support "I think you can cross off the dragon awareness part of your book.".

"Where did you learn to tame dragons?" he asked inquisitively.

"Hiccup showed me yesterday." I replied, feeling I was about to pass out right on that wall.

"Alright lets get going just one more test." Gobber said.

"Can I just have a minute?" I asked.

"No" Gobber replied "You already had your break when you tied me up and left for lunch."

"Are you still mad about that? That was a whole dragon fight ago." I replied with a smirk trying to get off the wall and stumbling around.

Gobber put his hand to his face and then asked "Hiccup, could you fly her over to my forge. She's not going to get there by walking.".

Hiccup nodded and called Toothless.

Gobber then called out again "Snotlout get that walking fireball of yours and give me a ride to my forge. I've got a job for you." I got on the back of the saddle rather clumsily and Hiccup directed Toothless out of arena. We took off and quickly landed at the blacksmiths with Gobber and Snotlout flying close behind. Once we got into the blacksmith's Hiccup sat me down on the whetstone chair.

"That was amazing" he said.

"Ya i'm sure its all good laughs to throw someone into an arena with a dragon and see if they get eaten." I sarcastically replied, still

dizzy from the explosion.

"No I mean you actually tamed Barf and Belch in the ring. I mean they were already kind of trained but you earned their trusts while fighting them." he stated.

Before either of us could say anymore Gobber walked in with an evil smile on his face.

"You ready for your final test?" he asked.

"What no blindfold or anything? Aww are you taking it easy on me after you almost killed me for a third time?" I mocked.

"I just had an interesting conversation with that Snotlout." Gobber said evilly.

"I didn't know the words 'Snotlout' and 'Interesting conversation' could be used in the sentence" joked Hiccup.

"He informs me that you were very modest about your sword skills at lunch." he said. I snapped out of any dizziness I had left and looked at Gobber with wide eyes. "I just sent him to make sure the rest of the group knows my true opinion about your proficiency with the sword." Gobber finished.

"What is he going to say Gobber?" I said, my heart pounding.

"The truth of course. That you could go head to head with anyone on this Island and that you may even be the better of all the warriors on Berk." He answered with a sly grin. "Now it will take Astrid several minutes to get from the Dragon Academy too here when Snotlout tells her the news. If I were you I would want a shield when she gets here." he concluded.

"Then give me one!" I yelled desperately.

"Oh i'm sorry but i'm all out. I do have the components to make a new one but I don't have the energy to make one. You see, I seemed to have missed lunch at the Great Hall." he said smugly.

Hiccup started moving towards the exit and said "I'll try to slow her down." before departing on Toothless.

I started panicking. This was worse than fighting a dragon because I knew that Astrid would fight more fiercely.

"Where are they?" I asked Gobber referring to the shield pieces. He pointed to a corner of the blacksmiths and I scrambled over to find the pieces. I grabbed a metal rim, several wooden wedges for the face, some leather strips for binding, and the shield boss that went into the middle. I started fitting the wooden wedges around the rim when I started hearing a group approaching the main town. Already? I scrambled to finish placing the rest of the wedges in place and fitted the boss into the center. I could hear voices now.

"Astrid it was Gobber who said it. The only person you should be mad at is him." I heard Hiccup say trying to buy me time. I then heard him say "And you definitely shouldn't be mad at me for ...". I heard a thump and Astrid obviously hit him. I finished binding the shield.

It was crude but it should hold up to Astrid, I hoped. I then left the blacksmith, not wanting to get trapped inside by Astrid. She spotted me as soon as I got outside.

"Hold up" she called out. I faced her with two hands on my shield. She had two axes in her hands and was wearing an, incredibly intimidating, frown on her face.

"Astrid why don't you just calm down. So what if I may be better than you with a sword." the other teens were waving me off from behind Astrid "You are definitely better than me with other weapons which make you the better warrior over all." I padded and it looked like it was about to work.

Then Gobber blurted out from inside the blacksmiths "Not necessarily. The sword offers many benefits in many different situations. Freya might be better than you in one of those situations."

That pushed Astrid over the edge and she threw one of her axes at me. It pierced through my freshly made shield. I tried to wrench it out but for Astrid charged the distance between us and just got it out just to drop it when she hit my shield with her other axe. I blocked blow after blow with my shield. I was surprised that it was holding up so well.

Astrid lost her other axe in my shield and tried to wrench it out. I took this advantage to push her back and, with some space between us, I wrenched the axe out of my shield and threw it away from Astrid so she couldn't pick it up again. Unfortunately, I saw that she saw the first axe she threw at me was laying on the ground close to her.

"Astrid it's over, you have proved your stronger than me." I said very scared she would refuse.

"So you yield?" Astrid asked.

Before I could answer Gobber answered oppositely for me saying "Of course she doesn't, she is winning with just a shield.". I glared at Gobber but he threw me a blunted sword and threw a mace to Astrid. Astrid charged with the mace and swung it at me. I dodged as I would have been unable to block the force with my shield. I sunk down into my fighting stance and attacked with my sword. For a moment it seemed like I might win as Astrid was straining to keep track of my sword and dodging it. Then she shoved me and there was some distance between us again. I relaxed a little and then Gobber yelled out "Don't drop your shield!". What? Astrid saw this too and thought she saw an opening and charged. I brought back my shield and hit her with the rim before she could finish her charge. She stumbled backwards and looked like the wind was knocked out of her. Everyone watching as well as Astrid looked confused. Astrid charged again and knocked the sword out of my hand. I didn't have good footing so I couldn't back away without falling. It didn't matter. Astrid swung the mace at me again and I tried to block with my shield. I was knocked to the ground and then Astrid swung again. This time my shield broke apart. Astrid moved the mace above her head again and I just flinched, putting my hands above my face and closed my eye's. Nothing happened. I opened my eyes and Astrid was still posed to hit me.

She was looking down at me and she breathed out one word, "Yield?". I

nodded timidly and she dropped the mace to the side and extended a hand to me. I just panted on the ground for a bit before I grabbed her hand and she pulled me to my feet. I was unsure if all the stunned expressions of the spectators were from the fact that I actually gave Astrid a worthy fight or that Astrid was actually chivalrous and accepted my yield.

Soon the people snapped out of their daze and started cheering Astrid's name. Even though I had lost and the cheering was for Astrid I was happy too. Gobber soon came out of the blacksmiths and walked up to me.

He said "I'll talk to Stoick about what skills ya got. Come find us in a few hours and we may have an answer of where your from."

He started to walk away and I stopped him "Gobber! You almost killed me four times today. That being said, thanks. I am glad to know somethings about myself and I wouldn't have learned them if it wasn't for you."

"Anytime, lass." he said with his expression softening.

He then walked away and I went to join the other teens. They were all congratulating Astrid and barely noticed me.

I heard Tuff say "Why did you stop we wanted to see some blood."

In response Astrid knelt down and picked up a rock, tossed it to Ruff and then said "Ruff could you show him some blood?"

"With pleasure." Ruff responded with a giggle and then proceeded to chase her brother around with a rock.

Astrid walked a little and then stopped asking "Wait where is Hiccup?"

"Where you left him?" replied Snotlout as he pointed to Hiccup. Apparently the hit that Astrid had given him earlier had knocked him out and he was just now recovering, struggling to get up. Astrid ran over to him and helped him to his feet.

"Wha ... What happened." Hiccup said groggily as he tried to get his senses back.

"Astrid knocked you out and then had a duel with Freya and won, but then chickened out and didn't finish it." Snotlout said nonchalantly.

Astrid was about to leave Hiccup to hit Snotlout when I twisted Snotlout's arm and forced him to the ground.

"If you want an ending to a fight I could show you one right now." I said to Snotlout twisting his arm close to it's breaking point.

"No ... on second thought ... I think what Astrid did was ... pretty cool" Snotlout wheezed with his face in the dirt. I released his arm and Astrid gave me a small smile.

"What ... you stopped the fight?" he looked at Astrid with amazement. "That's amazing. Astrid i'm so proud of you." he finished.

"And you didn't see any of it?" Astrid asked. You could see the look on Hiccup's face turn sour as he knew what was coming. Sure enough, Astrid hit Hiccup in the shoulder and stated "That's for missing the fight.". However, much to my surprise she then pulled him in close to her and gave him a long passionate kiss.

"And that?" Hiccup asked when their lips parted. She just shrugged off the question and then said "Pick any reason.".

After all of the excitement the group decided to head back to the dragon arena, or academy as they called it. I elected to stay out of the arena to rest, watching them work with their dragons. After a while the sun had moved and touched the water I went to find Gobber and Stoick and I found them in the Great Hall. They hadn't noticed me yet and I started to hear some of the conversation.

"... I'm saying I've never seen anyone fight like that. Her style isn't even remotely close to anything I've ever seen." Gobber said. They both noticed me and then Stoick said "Ah yes. Come and sit down.".

I sat next to Stoick and asked "Could you rule out more tribes based on my skills?".

Stoick had an awkward look on his face but then answered "Yes. However, your inexperience with dragons poses a problem.".

"Why?" I asked.

"No one that we know of knows how to use weapons like you do and still has no experience with a dragon." said Gobber.

"So how many tribes did you narrow it down to?" I asked, not catching on to what they were implying.

They both paused and looked at each other, then Stoick said "None. You don't fit with what we know about any tribe.".

**\*\*Authors Note:** I would just like to get any readers opinions, on a few things, at this point in the story. First off do you like it? Are there any scenes that you found were unfitting, awkward, badly written, were too long, too short, not enough action, or didn't accurately portray the characters? Secondly I originally conceived this story as a possible HTTYD video game. For example at the beginning the girl in the water would be character creation, then health would be explained when you fell off Gothi's porch, and now the tutorial part of the game would now be coming to an end with combat mechanics introduced in the fight with Astrid. My question to you is how much content do you guys want? Should I just include the main missions *\*Spoiler ahead\** where you are accepted into the group of Berk teens and become a dragon rider. Or do you want me to pepper in what would have been the side missions, training and studying all the known types of dragons.**\*\***

## 12. Decisions

I sat on my seat unsure of what emotion was running through me right now. Obviously I was projecting that with my body language because

Stoick and Gobber looked very confused.

"Do you need a moment lass?" Stoick asked.

"No its just ... I don't know ... what to do." I said.

"If you need a handkerchief you can use mine." offered Gobber pulling a disgusting looking rag out of his pocket.

"No ... I'm not sad it's just ... it hard to explain." I stammered. Gobber and Stoick were silent as I could tell they were no more equipped to deal with a situation like this than I was.

"I had gotten used to having no past but ... now that I have no clear future ... I'm confused ... I don't know what to do." I concluded.

"You 'ave a few options as I see it." started Stoick. "We could be wrong and you could guess between the five tribes that 'ave sort of similar skills to what you showed Gobber today. Although, I don't think you will get another chance like this from that village's chief if your wrong.".

I thought about that and shuddered at the thought. I remembered what Stoick told me about what the other tribes would do if they found out about my condition. I didn't want to have someone call me their daughter, sister, or even wife with me never being able to know if they were lying. On top of that I didn't want to take the chance that they would use me as an excuse to declare war on Berk. The people here were always good, if a little aggressive and irregular, to me and I didn't want them to get hurt.

"Or you could labor here for a while and apprentice under our shipbuilders. You could eventually build your own ship and sail to wherever you want." Stoick added.

I thought back to one of my fantasies. I could become a hunter and sail from Island to Island hunting for pelts and meat I could trade. I could even see the tribes and maybe someone would recognize me. I realized I was more likely to be taken over by a pirate on the seas alone than I was at becoming one. Then the horror of being stuck on that crate came back to me. What if I crashed, or was sunk with no one to help me.

"Or you could stay here and keep your options open. You could always leave in the future if you wanted to and you are certainly welcome to stay. I think quite a few of the townsfolk are impressed by the skills you showed today and will be wanting an apprentice for their trade."

Stay in Berk? I had never thought about making this place my home. I don't want to abandon my family. If I had family out there I wanted to search for them. The problem was how? Hiccup said that he found me to the south but Gothi said I could have been out there for a week. I could have come from the east or west and been carried by the waves.

Gobber and Stoick could tell that I was thinking hard and so Gobber said to Stoick "How about we give her some time to mull this over, Stoick?".

"Alright come to me when you 'ave an answer, lass." said Stoick, who then left with Gobber.

I spent several minutes pacing through the Great Hall thinking of my options. I would like nothing more than to go home and here my real name. Reunite with my siblings or my friends. If I could lie to myself I could do that now and pick a tribe. Even if I choose correctly, if they didn't have proof that I belonged there, I would never embrace that as my tribe. I was very tempted by the second option. Freely sailing the sea's and seeing all the tribes for myself. I could explore and of all the options this was the one where I knew I could find my family. It might take years but after traveling from island to island someone is sure to recognize me. Then there was option three. I could have a good life here but there was a small chance of me ever finding my family. I then remembered what Astrid said in the hut. What if I had no family or we were estranged.

I sat down and gazed into one of the fires, pondering my options. I had almost entered a trance staring into the flames when I heard someone walking behind me. I turned around and saw Fishlegs standing there and it looked like he came to talk to me.

He waived and I greeted "Hi Fishlegs".

"Hi, I just wanted to come an apologize on behalf of Meatlug for what happened to you earlier today. She's really a gentle dragon and I don't think she wanted to have any part in what happened to you."

"I know Fishlegs, but tell Meatlug, apology accepted." I said graciously.

"So what was Gobber doing earlier today?" he asked taking a seat next to me.

"Well after my seal was a dead end" I said, pausing for a moment to show him my necklace "Gobber was seeing what skills I had to see if he could find out where I'm from that way."

"Did it work?" asked Fishlegs, obviously fascinated by my explanation of today's events.

I shook my head and he got a somber look on his face and said "Oh". "So what will you do now?" he asked.

"Stoick laid out three choices for me and I'm not sure which one to go with." I said and I continued on "I could pick a tribe at random and hope my family is there. Quick and Simple. Or I could stay here for a while and labor until I can get a ship and search for where I'm from. Long, Arduous, and Dangerous. And three ...".

"Hiccup told me that you were going to steal a ship when you first woke up. Why the change of heart?" Fishlegs interrupted, pryingly.

"One, I know that Hiccup could run me down and bring the ship back with Toothless in a day. Two, even though Gobber has tried to get me killed several times, you guys didn't lock me in a cell and gave me a warm bed and food. It wouldn't be right to repay hospitality with



thievery."

"The third option?" asked Fishlegs, prompting me to return to my story.

"Well Stoick said I could stay here but ..." I trailed off.

"but what?" Fishlegs pried.

"Staying in Berk would mean it would be very unlikely that I could ever find my family or my tribe. It would be like ... I was giving up on them and I'd like to think that ... they wouldn't give up on me." I said getting up and pacing around again.

"Why couldn't you look for them while staying in Berk?" Fishlegs asked.

"How? Am I going to look down the well or in the forrest." I replied, sarcastically.

Fishlegs looked amused and then his face took a more serious tone. He started talking in a low, calm voice "You know I've completely forgotten where or who I heard this from but it is still a great piece of wisdom. What you can do is not restricted by your strengths but by the strengths of those you surround yourself with."

"Thats great but how is that going to help me?" I asked, not getting his meaning.

"Just make sure you are not saying that you can't look for your family here because you can't do it ... by yourself." he concluded. I took a minute to ponder what he said and then I made my decision.

"Fishlegs ... I got to go." I said.

A sad look came across his face and he said "So ... option two huh."

"No no no. It's just ... I need to talk to someone." I said, excitedly. "Thanks for the talk Fishlegs it's exactly what I needed to hear." I concluded as I started to run out of the Great Hall. It was late at night but luckily the moon was full so I could see where I was going. I raced down the steps and got to the door of Hiccup's house. I knocked furiously until someone answered. It was Hiccup holding a candle and struggling to keep his eyes open.

"Freya? What are you doing here, it's late." he yawned.

"I need to speak to Stoic-, the Chief, your father!" I said hyperactively as I had just sprinted from the Great Hall to here. Hiccup was unresponsive as he was still half asleep but luckily it didn't matter. I could hear Stoick getting up from behind Hiccup.

He brushed Hiccup aside "What do you want ... Freya?" he asked emphasizing my name as it was the first time he had heard or used it.

"I have made my decision. I would like to stay in Berk." I exclaimed.

"That's great but couldn't this 'ave waited until mornin' " Stoick asked.

"Not for me it couldn't!" I said defensively.

### 13. Trainer

The next morning I awoke rather early, despite being up so late the night before. I was stiff all over because of Gobber's tests. I was just shifting my position, trying to get a bit more rest, when I remembered what had happened the previous morning. My eyes shot open. No Snotlout. I decided to get dressed again and I realized I should probably find a way to wash my clothes soon. I made my bed and exited the Great Hall. There was no one coming to fetch me and no test I needed to complete so I decided to familiarize myself with the village. I walked down to the docks, to the arena, and through the surrounding forrest. I familiarized myself with every plank of wood that made up the houses and every tree or rock in the forrest. I heard a snap of a twig behind me and I saw a little dragon stalking me. As soon as I turned to look at it it darted behind a tree. It poked it's head out from behind it and began to observe me. I smiled and sat down on a log to observe it as well.

"You watching over me?" I asked the dragon mockingly.

It continued to stare at me and slowly made it's way from behind the tree as it saw I wasn't going to move.

"Come on, I won't hurt you." I said lowering my hand to the ground in a fist.

I knew this would spark it's curiosity and it soon started walking up to me to see what I had clutched in my hand. I gradually opened my fist as it got closer. This increased it's excitement and it quickened its pace. It was right at my feet now and I slowly opened my hand. It was so excited that it didn't care when I revealed I had nothing. With my palm open I placed it in front of the dragon, like Hiccup showed me a few days ago. The dragon didn't rub up against it but jumped onto my arm and found it's perch on my shoulder. I spent a few minutes playing with my new friend before it stopped and moved it's head around as if it heard something. Sure enough it leaped off our log and chased a squirrel into it's burrow under a tree. After some frantic digging the little dragon gave up and returned to me.

"You hungry little guy?" I said as I scratched the dragons chin. I offered my hand down so he could climb onto my shoulder. "Come on lets both get some breakfast." I said as I made my way back to town.

Back in town many people were going about their daily activities. I couldn't find Hiccup or any of the other dragon riders around but I heard the clang of metal at the blacksmiths. I walked past it and I saw Gobber pounding away at some metal on the anvil and singing.

"I've got my axe, and I've got my mace, and I've got my wife with an ugly face, I'm a ... Hi Freya." he sung. I was surprised that he

noticed me as he looked deeply concentrated in his work. He turned to me and saw the dragon on my shoulder.

"Oh and you got a new friend I see. Be careful with those terrors; they bite harder than a shark when their hungry."

"About that, do you know what I can feed it?" I asked.

"Dragons will eat just about anything, but fish is always a good option." said a familiar voice from behind me. "But his owner will feed him so don't worry about it." said Hiccup as I turned around.

"Oh this dragon already has an owner?" I said with a little disappointment.

"Well which house did he come out of?" Hiccup asked.

"It ... He didn't, he was in the forrest hunting squirrels for food." I explained.

"Wait, you tamed a wild Terror in the forrest?" Hiccup asked with astonishment.

"Ya he isn't so hard to manage, he's tiny." I said scratching the dragons chin. Gobber was observing us and then walked over and pushed Hiccup away from me.

"No no no no no. I see what's going on here Hiccup and she is not going with you. I haven't been able to keep up with my forge work since my last apprentice never has time to work because he is always at the dragon academy." Gobber scolded.

"Wait what are you talking about Gobber?" I asked.

"Stoick announced today that you were going to be staying with us. I was right next to him when he said it and I was still fifth in line to ask him for his blessing to make you my apprentice." Gobber explained.

"What?! When I told Stoick I'd be staying I didn't think he would barter me off to someone like some prized yak to be traded" I protested.

"Your not being bartered, anyone needs my dad's permission if they want to switch jobs or take an apprentice. It's just a measure of control so that we don't end up with three hundred shipwrights and two fishermen. You will be able to choose which apprenticeship you take out of the ones my father approves." explained Hiccup.

"And your going to choose the blacksmiths apprentice aren't you Freya? After all we have a history." Gobber stated.

"Gobber, after yesterday, I have a gut feeling that if we worked together with a lot of sharp objects around, it wouldn't end out well for either of us." I reasoned. All of this was allot for me to take in. "But I see what you mean , about how Vikings don't share too well now, Gobber." I concluded.

"Yep I bet this whole things given Stoick one massive headache with

all those people asking his blessing." Gobber said going back to his metalwork.

"Well if I were you I'd keep my head low" said Hiccup moving towards Toothless to depart.

"Why? I'm going to have to get a job here sooner or later." I replied.

"I didn't mean from possible mentors, I meant from my father. You were the cause of his lack of sleep and now a headache." Hiccup shivered and then asked "Why did you have to wake us up anyways?".

I was offended that he asked that and I responded sarcastically "Oh I'm sorry. I just made the most important decision of my life but I guess I should have waited until morning to tell anyone because Hiccup and Stoick need their beauty sleep."

Gobber overheard this and started laughing.

"Well good luck if he finds you. It's a shame you can't just fly away for the day. That's what I do when he's mad at me." Hiccup planted not so subtly. He then took off on Toothless. I sighed and shook my head at him for trying such an obvious attempt to sway me to choose to work at the dragon academy. I had a feeling that I was going to get allot more people trying to get me to become their apprentice before the day was done. I found some raw fish and fed my new dragon then I let him play with some other 'Terrors' in the town while I got my breakfast at the Great Hall. Neither Stoick or the other teens were in there but that didn't stop me from being overwhelmed by conversation. Everyone wanted to get to know me now and all the conversations ended the same. It was always "You would make a great something apprentice" and even a few of them tried to tempt me with offers of chickens, yaks, sheep or other tradable goods. After my breakfast/lunch I was so tired of all the conversations and I was not looking forward to bumping into Stoick so I just headed back to my bed to ward off anymore prospective mentors. I was laying on my bed with my hand dangling off when I felt something rough, rub up against it. I looked down and saw my Terror staring up at me. I picked It up and I stroked and scratched it on my bed. It soon curled up under my arm and fell asleep. I looked up off my bed and saw that the hall was empty now. I sighed in relive a moment too soon because I could now hear two voices in the hall. It didn't take me long to recognize that it was Hiccup and Stoick so I laid motionless and tried my best to not be noticed.

"... I want Freya." I heard Hiccup say and It took me completely by surprise. I thought he was with Astrid. Wait why would he be telling his father like this?

"Not you too Hiccup. Absolutely not, if anything you should be rotating people out of the Dragon Academy to 'elp with all the other empty jobs we need filled." Stoick said. Oh. I was a little embarrassed for assuming too much but I listened more intently.

"That's ridiculous. No other area is less staffed than us." Hiccup defended.

"Their are six of you and Gobbers getting buried with work at the

forge and there is no one to 'elp him." said Stoick accusingly.

"There are four of us and the twins, and half of my time is spent making sure they don't cause problems for the whole village. We haven't gotten any work done with dragons for months." Hiccup explained.

"What are you talking about Hiccup, you and your friends have been whizzing around Berk, non-stop, for weeks. I'd say thats getting plenty of work done." Stoick said.

"We have been busy lifting up building supplies, herding animals, and scaring fish into nets. That is not what I call training and studying dragons. The biggest problem you will have if other jobs aren't done are slightly thinner and upset villagers. The biggest problem you will have if we don't know how to prevent confrontations with dragons ... the complete destruction of Berk." Hiccup said.

"If I allow this you will 'ave to teach 'er everything you know about dragons and that could take years. Not to mention you would 'ave most of YOUR time taken up teaching 'er. Then who is going to watch the twins?" Stoick replied.

"Years!? I just taught her the basics two days ago. She tamed Barf and Belch in the arena yesterday. Today she ..." Hiccup started but was interrupted by Stoick.

"That dragon was already tame." Stoick said disapprovingly.

"Tamed by the twins isn't the same kind of tame we are talking about. Anyways, today she tamed a Terror by herself. She is a fast learner and I guaranty you she would be more useful to Berk on the back of a dragon." Hiccup finished.

"Hiccup makes a good point Chief." I announced as I had walked up to them with my Terror on my shoulder. They were both surprised to see me standing there but then Hiccup got a smile on his face as he saw that I was agreeing to work in the Dragon Academy. The chief sighed and squeezed the bridge of his nose.

"Alright on one condition. You both spend some of your free time 'elping Gobber in the forge or I'll never 'ear the end of it from 'im." Stoick caved.

Hiccup grinned and turned to me saying "So. Are you ready to become a dragon trainer?".

**\*\*Authors note\*\*:** **\*\*For any of you that have been \*\*\*\*following this story since the first day, I would just like to give you a heads up that some of my later plot-lines will rely on aspects from season two. So this isn't actually placed after season 1 but after season 2 of Dragons: Defenders of Berk.\*\***

## 14. Opening

"So what am I going to be doing?" I asked Hiccup as he escorted me out the door and towards Toothless.

"Learning at first. We need to teach you what to feed a dragon, how to train them to do certain things, and ..." Hiccup started and then I interrupted him.

"... And how to fly like you and Toothless?" I asked excitedly.

"Well not exactly like me and Toothless. His tail kind of makes it a little more difficult." Hiccup said somberly.

"How did that happen anyways?" I asked curiously.

"It kind of a long story and ..." He started again and then I interrupted him.

"... And I'm not leaving Berk anytime soon so whats the problem?" I stated.

We were now at Toothless's side and Hiccup patted Toothless on the head and said "Well ... I kind of ... shot him out of the sky.".

"Umm ... okay. You feel like explaining." I said a little uneasy around him now. Hiccup gave me the impression that he was a gentile person that would never intentionally try to harm anything.

He saddled onto Toothless and then started "We were at war with the Dragons since I was born. I didn't really fit in with the people here." Hiccup said.

"Astrid told me about your last title, the useless." I interjected.

"Great!" said Hiccup sarcastically and then continued "So I wanted to be noticed for doing something good in the village. So ... I shot down Toothless and I was going to become the first viking ever to kill a Nightfury. I found him crashed in the forest, tied up in the bola I launched, but when I went in for the kill ... I ... just ... couldn't. After that I tried to help him with his tail and I realized that it needed to be in certain positions for him to fly. After that, me riding him, just became necessary and we became friends." Hiccup concluded.

"Good. You had me worried that the academy would be full of whips, muzzles, and chains for a second." I said as I breathed a sigh of relief. I got up onto Toothless and my Terror moved from my shoulder and clung to my back as it was expecting the sudden gust of wind that came from Toothless launching into the air. I saw the arena below us and all the other teens working with their dragons. I was surprised when Toothless dived down and swooped through the opening of the arena with great precision.

I was immediately noticed by Snotlout who stated "Great, Hiccup just had to bring the loser here.".

"Snotlout!" scolded Astrid.

"Everybody I have some good news." Hiccup announced "Freya has decided to stay on Berk and my father has allowed her to join us in the academy.".

Snotlout gave a disappointed sigh but the general consensus in the academy was one of joy.

"Is that YOUR Terror?" asked Fishlegs.

"Yep, I found him this morning and he seems to like me." I replied and generally everyone was impressed with me.

"Wow she can get a Terror to sit on her shoulder. She still wimps out in a fight." condescended Snotlout. Astrid who was getting frustrated with Snotlout's attitude grabbed a shiny metal shield.

"You want your first lesson about dragons now?" she asked me and without even waiting for a response she reflected the light so that it was shining on Snotlout. In an instant my dragon leapt from my shoulder to investigate the strange light. It began biting and clawing at the light which, conveniently, was on Snotlout. Astrid soon put the shield down and, with no more shiny light to catch, my Terror flew back to my shoulder. I laughed but Hiccup turned to me and said "My dad was right in some respects. We have some work to plan out so I can't start training you right now. So could you just sit back and watch for a while?".

I nodded and leant against a wall.

Hiccup then addressed the group "Ok so our fishing and trading boats are being taken over by pirates and my dad's given us the job of driving off the pirates."

"Ya except the problem with protecting the fleet means we have to actually attack the pirate ships" Fishlegs stated timidly and then he gulped and continued "And I don't think they are going to like that idea too much."

"Who cares Hookfang and I can take them out ourselves." bragged Snotlout in his usual bravado.

"No Fishlegs is right." added Astrid "They are way too well equipped for a direct attack. I was scouting a few pirate ships earlier and they definitely know we have dragons. They've got crossbows, net throwers, catapults, lots of bolas ... basically everything they need to take down a dragon."

"So any suggestions on how we should attack this problem?" Hiccup asked.

Ruffnut spoke up "Oh we could get a ship and wait out there until the pirates come. Then when they take the ship we blow it up with Barf's gas."

"That ... could work if we had more ships than them and were willing to lose them all. There would also still need to be someone on the ship to ignite the gas." said Hiccup as supportively as possible.

The twins both lifted their hands as if to volunteer for the job before Hiccup dismissed the idea.

"Astrid, Fishlegs, any ideas?" asked Hiccup. They both shook their

heads.

Snotlout began to suggest something before Astrid cut him off and said "We already know your idea Snotlout."

"No you don't!" Snotlout protested.

"You were going to say we should just man up and attack the ships." Astrid interpreted with annoyance in her voice. She must have been right because Snotlout didn't refute this.

"What about you Freya?" Hiccup asked.

"Huh?" I stated as I was mostly consumed playing with my Terror.

"How would you attack the pirate ships?" Hiccup clarified.

"Oh I agree with Snotlout" I said and everyone, even Snotlout, was surprised by this.

"I mean you can fly. That is a huge advantage. Why not just fly so high above them so that your not in range." I clarified.

"Show her Toothless, plasma blast!" Hiccup said and the dragon tilted it's head into the sky and shot a brilliant purple ball of fire into the air. After it traveled for a while it exploded in mid-air creating a beautiful spectacle of purple light.

"A dragons shots can't go that far. If their in range for us, we are in range for them." Hiccup instructed.

"Ok thats good to know but I wasn't talking about their shots." I said and everyone was listening intently now. "If a dragon can carry a person on it's back it should be able to carry a few rocks or even a tree."

Astrid gave a huff of laughter and then stated "We could maybe hit a ship, at that height, one time in twenty if we dropped boulders."

"Then we will drop twenty rocks and not use boulders." Fishlegs added. "If we drop it from really high up the rocks shouldn't need to be more than a few pounds to break through the ships hull." concluded Fishlegs.

"Ok but we still got the problem of how to aim. From that high up we can't aim accurately at all." stated Hiccup.

"Thats no problem." I stated "Look down. What do you see?". Everyone looked at their feet and the twins butted heads and fell back when they tilted their heads down.

"My feet?" Astrid stated.

"The ground?" Fishlegs stated.

"My shadow!" Hiccup exclaimed. He looked up and I nodded at him.



"And at midday everyones shadow will be right under them. You can use that to aim." I said.

"That's great. How long until midday Fishlegs?" asked Hiccup.

Fishlegs walked over to a sundial and said "Only an hour and a half, Hiccup."

"That's not that much time." Hiccup said quietly. "Alright everyone listen up!" Hiccup announced "Ruff, Tuff, I need you to go to the docks and get enough nets and ropes for everyone's dragons and come back here. We need a way to hold the rocks. Astrid, Snotlout, I need you to bring any boulders or rocks you can find and bring them back here. Fishlegs, use Meatlug to break the boulders into a good size and try not to have her eat too many." Hiccup commanded. "And Freya ... uh ..." Hiccup stammered.

"Stay here and watch?" I asked, unenthusiastically.

"No this was your plan, come with me to Gobbers and help me sort the problem of how to open the nets and attach them to our dragons." Hiccup stated and we got onto Toothless and flew off to Gobbers blacksmiths. I let my Terror go explore town as I knew I would be too busy to pay any attention to him.

When we landed Gobber was initially pleased to see us and said "So you two have taken the day off and come to help me out."

"Sorry Gobber but we actually need your help." Hiccup said and then he explained the situation to Gobber.

"Well a pull pin would be the best option if you only got one shot. As a matter of fact I still got the components from a few old dragon netter traps." Gobber explained.

"Great, we are going to have to break the safety though. Freya grab one and figure out a way to disengage the safety so that we can use it by pulling a rope." Hiccup said "I'm going to check on how the others are doing and help out if they need it.". He then departed on Toothless and I got to work cracking open a trap component so I could modify it. After thirty minutes Hiccup returned with Astrid and had four of the five mechanisms completed.

"Wow, impressive." commented Astrid on the speed at which I completed my work.

"You should have seen her yesterday. She put a shield together in no time. I guess knowing someone is coming for you armed with two axes is a better motivation than most." Gobber commented. Astrid giggled at this which was a little unsettling. I didn't think Astrid was going to attack me again but the mere fact that she wasn't embarrassed or a little bit remorseful about coming after me was a little alarming. There! All the mechanisms were ready.

I turned to Hiccup and Astrid and said "Ok these should release the rocks if we can attach a rope to this.". I gestured to the pin in the component.

"Ok let's take them back and hook up our dragons." Hiccup said and

they got on their dragons, and I got on Toothless, and we went back to the Academy. The arena floor was littered with head sized rocks when we got there and the twins were just arriving with ropes and nets all tangled in Barf and Belch's spikes. It took another thirty minutes to get all the dragons fitted with the nets and rocks. However there wasn't a rope long enough to reach to Ruffnut or Tuffnut from the net full of rocks.

"I'll ride on the back of Barf and Belch and pull the rope." I said to Hiccup. His eye grew wide with surprise.

"Are you sure!?" he asked.

"Ya it will be fine. We really had a good time the other day trying to kill each other." I said semi-sarcastically and I put my hands up to Barf and Belch. Surprisingly, both heads immediately moved into my hands and I scratched them.

"See!" I exclaimed to Hiccup.

"I guess this is for the best. If the rope actually reached they would just fight over it until they pulled it." Hiccup whispered. After a few seconds of bonding with Barf and Belch Ruff and Tuff walked over and Ruff yelled "Hey, back off our dragon.".

"Ya he is ours to ignore and not do that chin scratchy thing." Tuff added.

The right head looked annoyed and breathed gas in both of their faces. I laughed and climbed onto the body. Ruff and Tuff got onto the heads and then we were ready to go. Hiccup signaled everyone to move out and we started flying. We headed in the direction that Astrid saw the pirate ships before. Several minutes passed and Fishlegs was getting worried that we wouldn't find the ships before midday. With only a couple of minutes remaining until midday Astrid spotted the three ships chasing a Berk fishing boat. We climbed even higher to stay well out of range and prepare our attack.

"Line up your shadows." Hiccup said and then Fishlegs corrected him.

"We should probably move them ahead of the ships because it will take a few seconds for the rocks to fall." Fishlegs said and then Hiccup commanded likewise.

"Is it midday yet." Hiccup asked Fishlegs and he pulled out a portable sundial. Fishlegs nodded and then Hiccup said "Ok pull your ropes!".

I pulled on my rope and watched, in between the two heads, as everyones rocks fell towards the sea. They became invisible as they fell further from us. I started to get disappointed that we missed until I saw the sea all around the three ships turn white and we heard a noise like thunder. Two of the ships keeled violently and one of them even broke in half. The third looked like it was unaffected until we slowly saw the blue of the ocean come over the deck as it took on water and sank.

The twins turned around and said "That was awesome."

"So much destruction."

"And carnage."

"Please come up with more plans that end like this" they said.

Then Hiccup looked back and commented to me "Great idea. It's too bad we can only use it once per day though."

"Actually Hiccup if we do some tests we could use our shadows to aim during most times of the day." Fishlegs pointed out.

"That's great. Alright everyone lets get back to Berk." Hiccup concluded.

"Wait Hiccup! We aren't just going to leave the survivors stranded are we?" I asked, sympathetic about being trapped at sea because of my recent endeavor.

"Don't worry. There is plenty of driftwood and the current here will take them strait past Outcast Island. They will only be out here for a few hours." he reassured. The flight back was considerably quicker, as we didn't have lots of rocks weighing us down. I got off Barf and Belch and Snotlout immediately came over to me.

"So, you doing anything later?" he asked.

"Get lost Snotlout" I repelled.

## 15. Discovery

"HICCUP!" boomed Stoick from the academy gate. Everyone froze and stopped celebrating. He looked angry and was glaring over my shoulder. I turned to see what he might be looking at and I saw the twins, trying to look as innocent as possible.

I whispered over to them "You guys did tell the fishermen why you took the nets, right?".

"Uh" Tuff belated.

"We may have ... actually ... forgot ... that part." Ruff explained.

"I just came here from the docks where I was told that Ruffnut and Tuffnut stole five fishing nets and caused an explosion." Stoick scolded. I looked back over at the twins in shock.

Ruff was now looking at the ground and said "An accidental gas leak may have occurred."

I saw Hiccup, who was within earshot of the twins, rub his hand down his face in frustration.

Tuff absentmindedly yet excitedly added "Don't forget about the accidental ignition!".

"Dad i'm sorry but we ..." Hiccup started but then was cut off by Stoick.

"Save it Hiccup. I told you that this would happen. You can't keep the twins from running wild and train Freya at the same time." Stoick added.

"But the twins weren't running wild and I wasn't training Freya. They were getting the nets for Freya's plan to..." Hiccup started but was interrupted again by Stoick.

"So you told the twins to do this?! I was generous enough to give you the option to stay on Berk and now you are thieving and destroying things?" Stoick scolded me.

"Dad for the love of Thor, we sunk three pirate ships!" Hiccup yelled.

Stoick looked stunned for a moment and then scolded "I told you it was too dangerous to attack the pirates and thats why I put you in charge of finding a safer way to protect our ships. You think that disobeying me ...".

This time Hiccup interrupted his father and said "We didn't attack them head on! It was Freya's plan to drop rocks on them from well out of their range. I was the one who ordered Ruff and Tuff to get the nets because we needed to attack them before noon. I was the one who gave the order though so, if your going to be mad at anyone, be mad at me."

"Three pirate ships?" Stoick said inquisitively.

"And no danger to anyone, ... except maybe the dock workers near the explosion" Hiccup stated and shot a glare at the twins before continuing "But that was a one time thing.". Hiccup was awkwardly grinning at his father waiting for a response.

"Good job." Stoick said.

"I'm sorr ... what?! So ... your not mad?" Hiccup asked.

"Oh I'm still mad but sinking three pirate ships is still a great accomplishment. However, you two" Stoick said, now pointing at the twins "... are going to help with the repairs to the dock."

Ruff and Tuff sighed and Ruff complained "You me 'con'struction?".

"But thats my least favorite kind of 'struction" Tuff commented.

"Oh and Freya?" Stoick turned from departing and said "That must have been one good plan. It looks like you chose the right place to work.". I just looked at him with a look of gratitude and Stoick walked away with the twins. After they departed Hiccup went over the basics of how to train a dragon with me. After a little convincing he got Astrid to let me ride Stormfly alone, as operating Toothless's tail mechanism would be too complex and unnecessary to learn. After a we trained at flying for a bit my Terror came back to me. We went over a few methods of training different dragons, Terrible Terrors included. When it was about seven'o clock, I had trained my Terror to receive and execute basic commands like fetch and I learned the Terror call to bring my Terror to me if we were separated. We all

decided to end for the day and we all decided to get supper. We all started walking back to give the dragons a break from flying with us on their backs.

"I think my rocks were the ones that caused the ship to split in half" Snotlout claimed and everyone ignored him.

"If someone can do some tests with me tomorrow, we can figure out a way to use Freya's rock method at anytime of the day." asked Fishlegs.

"I'm not so sure we should just drop rocks all the time, I mean, there is no challenge in it." Snotlout stated.

"How about next time you and Hookfang 'challenge' yourselves and attack the vicious pirates head on. If you fail, you can tell us your first hand experience of what it's like on a ship when rocks start crashing through the deck." Astrid taunted.

"That's a challenge we are willing to ..." Snotlout started before Hookfang roared at him.

"Oh I almost forgot, Freya." Fishleg exclaimed now holding out a book. "You should probably start reading this." he suggested, handing the book to me.

"What is it?" I asked.

"It's the book of dragons, everything we know about Dragons." Hiccup stated. "Training techniques, measurements, descriptions, speeds, and there are ... actually ... the left over ... tips ... on how to kill them." Hiccup listed off. Toothless heard the last part and slapped his rider with his tail.

"What?! I can't make words, written in ink, disappear, Toothless." Hiccup defended against his dragon.

"How dose that work?" I asked.

"What?" Hiccup replied.

"How dose he know what you said?" I clarified.

"I actually don't know exactly how. I assume he just responds to my body language and picks up on a few key words." Hiccup responded.

"Have you ever tested it?" I replied.

"Well he can't speak back to me so it would be a useless test." Hiccup laughed.

"Yes he can! He just did." I exclaimed "All you would have to do is talk to your dragon in one way and project body language that would suggest your trying to convey the opposite. Then you would just wait an see if Toothless slaps you with is tail or not." I explained and the group laughed at my 'tail' comment.

"That might actually work Hiccup. We could test that tomorrow" commented Fishlegs.

"I thought the point of getting a new dragon trainer was so that we would have to do less work not more?" huffed Snotlout. We then walked into the Great Hall ate our meals and said our goodbyes for the night. It was still early so I got a bucket of water and borrowed a washboard and, finally, washed my clothes. I set them near one of the fires to dry and then got a candle to start reading the Book of Dragons. I read nearly halfway through the book, before I put out the candle and went to sleep. The next morning someone shook me awake. I was still incredibly tired so it must have been early. I managed to open my eye's enough to see that it was Fishlegs that was shaking me.

"How early is it? The suns not even out yet." I asked Fishlegs.

"6 and a half hours. Are you ready to get started?" he Asked.

"You guys always get up this early?" I asked, yawning and stretching in bed.

"No, but the sun will be up soon and I thought we could do the tests with our shadows today." He said, excitedly.

I groaned and then caved "Fine. Let me get dressed.". Fishlegs left and I retrieved my clothes by the fire. The air was cold outside of the Great Hall and I could see the giant clouds of breath that were coming out of Meatlug. The sun had just risen enough so that we didn't need torches to navigate.

"I should probably introduce you two properly. I mean without the ropes and Gobber. Meatlug this is Freya." Fishlegs said. I went up to the Gronckle and touched her snout without any pause. The dragon nuzzled me and then Fishlegs commented "Wow. She is usually more timid around new people.".

"Well if there really was a war between Dragons and Vikings a few years ago I would assume all other people she would meet would have had ... bad experiences with dragons and vise versa." I commented before gesturing for Fishlegs to mount his dragon; I did the same after Fishlegs was on Meatlugs back and we flew over to the arena to get some equipment and a log book for the tests. We then flew to a field where I got off.

"Ok it's almost 7. I'm going to fly up to different heights and you can mark where the shadow of me and Meatlug is. If you can see the rock, try to count how long it takes for it to hit the ground" Fishlegs explained. I nodded and walked across the field until I got into his shadow. I stuck a stake into the ground and he dropped a rock. I counted until I heard it hit the ground. Fishlegs went to three different heights real quickly and I practically had to sprint to every shadow.

After, he came over to me and said "We will try that again after five minutes and measure how much it has changed. For the rest of the test we don't need to count how long it takes for the rock to hit the ground.". I glared at him, completely out of breath from running between the shadows. A few minutes into my break I heard a familiar little squawk behind me. My terror had found us and was wanting some attention. Playing with my Terror helped pass the time between the tests. At 10 I was exhausted and had enough of the tests.

"This doesn't all need to be done in one day Fishlegs" I breathed out having just run between the last two shadows for 10 o'clock. Fishlegs was leisurely resting against Meatlug in the grass.

"Why can't it, besides we have only been out here for a couple of hours." Fishlegs said.

"No, you have been out here sitting in a saddle for a couple of hours. I have been out here sprinting around for several hours. Take me back to Berk." I requested.

"Freya we need to know how to use this method at any time. What if we get attacked by pirates tomorrow and we haven't completed these tests." Fishlegs replied.

"If I can't go back and get some food I'm going to die of starvation before tomorrow." I pleaded.

"I doubt that. You are just going to have to tough it out. I'll tell you what, if you continue with these test I'll do all the calculations with the data later." Fishlegs offered.

I ignored his offer and said "Fine. If your not going to take me back to town, I'm going myself."

"Good luck." he said closing his eye's and reclining further on Meatlug "It's a long ways if your not on the back of a Dragon".

With Fishlegs unaware I climbed on the back of Meatlug and said "I know.". I took off and Meatlug was surprisingly receptive to me and we headed towards town. I was surprised that Fishlegs hadn't demanded that I bring back his Dragon. However, when I just got up over the trees I heard a Gronckle call behind me. Meatlug then ignored my commands completely and sped back to her rider. She landed right in front of Fishlegs and I got off and crossed my arms in annoyance with a matching look on my face.

"Don't look at me like that. You are the one who hijacked my dragon." Fishlegs said in a triumphant voice.

"I'm trying to decide if I hate you more than Snotlout right now." I stated deep in thought. My annoyance finally faded and I said "Nope, he's still worse."

"Alright it is almost five past 10 I need you to ..." Fishlegs said but I interrupted him.

"I know. I know. Mark your, stupid, shadow again." I said, defeated. I was relieved when it finally turned midday and I said in relief "There. Can you take me back now?".

"Wait, we don't know if the sun behaves the same way after midday." Fishlegs said.

"WHAT?!" I shouted in disbelieve.

"Have you ever tested your shadow like this before? We can't just assume something will behave in a certain way. We need to be sure because we will only get one shot with the rocks." Fishlegs

defended.

"No, no, no." I said making my way to the midpoint where Fishlegs and Meatlug flew up from. I paced out the distances from the last test and said "When your shadow lines up with these spots we are going back!". I didn't even bother to stand by to mark the five after 12 positions and I just rested in the field. Sure enough Fishlegs came back and confirmed they were correct and we headed back. When we entered the Great Hall I could see the other teens sat at the table and I grabbed my food and sauntered over to them.

Astrid immediately noticed the exhausted look on my face and asked "What happened to you?".

"We were testing how our shadows behaved at different times." I said, abrasively.

"Then why do you look like you just got trampled by a heard of yaks" Astrid asked, almost laughing at me.

"Because, I don't have a Dragon to carry me around and 'someone' forgot that little fact and made me sprint to keep up with him, for five hours." I said venomously.

"It looks promising, I should have a way to attack those pirates at anytime of the day by tomorrow" Fishlegs said.

"That's great Fishlegs. Good work." Hiccup applauded. I was very annoyed that Hiccup didn't appreciate me, or Fishlegs didn't correct him but I was too tired to voice my opinion.

Luckily, Astrid nudged him and Hiccup added "And you too Freya.". I just grunted in response as I was busy chugging my mug of water.

When I finished I commented "Why did I have to tame a Dragon too small to ride?".

"Tough luck" Astrid jabbed.

"Well you should have talked to Astrid and borrowed Stormfly again." Hiccup commented only to later regret it as Astrid elbowed him in the ribs. Obviously everyone was really defensive about their dragons, as shown by the twins yesterday and Astrid's little bit of violence just now.

Hiccup then pointed out "Well I can't keep flying you everywhere on Toothless. So ... how about we head to Dragon Island later and you can tame a rideable dragon of your choosing.".

"Really? You think I'm ready for my own dragon?" I asked. Astrid supported this, realizing that this would mean I would never need to borrow Stormfly again.

"Why not." Astrid said "You have more experience than even Hiccup had when he tamed Toothless.".

"Cool." I commented.

"So did you read the book." asked Fishlegs.



"I got halfway through. I saw all of what you guys put about your dragons except for yours Hiccup." I said, some curiosity in my voice.

"Well it's in the back half and it's not complete anyways." Hiccup stated.

"What!? Your ok with everyone else's dragons being documented, but not your own." I pried.

"There is some stuff but ... well ... you know that the way me and Toothless met was ... unique. I can't endorse that kind of approach method and I can't exactly say for sure what would work with other Nightfury's because there aren't any." Hiccup said. "I also don't want to put down a speed because ... well ..." Hiccup started but Snotlout chimed in.

"Because he can't tell how fast Toothless used to be since he limped his dragon." Snotlout said, very inconsiderately. Astrid then whipped her head forward to face Snotlout and kicked his knees under the table. "Ow! Those were ... still ... sore from ... last time" Snotlout cried in pain.

I decided to change the subject and I turned to the twins and asked "So how long did it take you to repair the damage you guys did?".

"A long time." bragged Tuff, contented by thinking about the damage he caused. Ruff was annoyed by his tone and hit him, sending him face first into his food.

Ruff dispiritedly said "A very long time."

She then turned to her brother and scolded him "Why did you have to spark the gas? I let it out on accident."

Hiccup stopped the fight and then sighed as he said "Whoa guys. I could have gone my whole life without hearing that sentence and I have a feeling that before this is over alot more things are going to be said that no one wants to hear. So, how about you two just stop while your ahead."

"Ahead of what?" they both asked.

Hiccup sighed in frustration and said "You know what, I'm finished my meal. How about we fly to dragon island and get you a dragon."

Hiccup whispered over to Astrid "If you can outpace the twins you are welcome to come with us, otherwise ..."

Astrid took one look at the twins who were now starting the fight again and said "Lets get out of here.". When we left the Great Hall we all quickly got onto our dragons and Hiccup flew Toothless over to the academy and grabbed a satchel.

"This has a few supplies you might need" Hiccup explained. "I take it you read up to the parts about dragon nip and eels.". I nodded and he continued "There is some of that in there and some smoked fish.". With that we departed to Dragon Island. It took an hour before it

showed up on the horizon. Suddenly, Toothless began acting strange and let out a roar.

"Toothless! Calm down bud. It's just Dragon Island." Hiccup said while rubbing Toothless's side. A few seconds passed in silence and then a near identical roar responded to Toothless's.

"Hiccup!" said Astrid in a worried tone.

"Was that the roar of ..." I asked and Hiccup finished my sentence.

"Another Nightfury." Hiccup said in a very serious tone.

## 16. Encounter

"Sorry Freya but your dragon is going to have to wait. We are not missing this chance. Lets go bud!" Hiccup explained and then prompted Toothless while clicking the mechanism in his stirrup. We took off with a burst of speed and left Astrid behind. The burst of speed was so great that it almost through me off the saddle.

Hiccup noticed my loosened grip on him and commanded "Freya hold on!".

I fortified my position on the saddle and complained "That would have been nice to know before you almost through me off!". Hiccup didn't respond as he and Toothless were completely concentrated on finding the other Fury. As I was getting accustomed to moving at this speed I decided to help look. We were approaching a volcanic island shrouded in mist. I could see flocks of different types of dragons moving in and out of the patches of mist. Toothless let out another roar and it was returned once again. I could see all the other dragons start to cower as they realized that two Nightfurys were now among them.

I saw the mist in one section of the island swirl violently and I pointed out "Look over there!". Soon after Hiccup looked over, there were flashes of black poking through the mist clouds in that direction.

"Come on Toothless!" Hiccup said as he directed him to dive towards the disturbance. We moved through several patches of fog and then Toothless let out a different type of roar. His ears perked up and then he turned his head to face a certain direction. Hiccup adjusted Toothless's tail to support Toothless's suggested heading. As soon as we passed through another fog cloud we could see the other Nightfury hovering in a clear area and watching us. Toothless did the same and hovered for a moment in the clearing. The other Nightfury then roared and disappeared through the fog. Toothless pursued it and for the next few minutes we gave chase through the clouds. I didn't know how Hiccup could keep his eye on the other Nightfury until I realized that Hiccup was letting Toothless lead. Suddenly, Toothless let out a plasma ball and it went way wide of our target. Then it exploded and the force of it seemed to disrupt the other Fury's flight. He shot out a few more until we had gained significant ground on it. We got right up on it and Toothless nudged the other Fury's tail with his snout. It became apparent to me that Toothless was trying to get the other Fury to land without harming it. Suddenly, Toothless came up beside the Fury and it banked to the other side to get away from us.

Toothless retaliated by flipping over to the other side of the Fury. Hiccup obviously had been on a dragon that flipped before so he stayed on Toothless. I, on the other hand, fell off Toothless while he was upside down and fell onto the back of the other Fury. After a second of not knowing what happened I clung to the Fury with all my might. It noticed the extra weight and looked back, with its narrow purple eye's, to stare face to face with me. Another explosion went off and it looked like Toothless was still trying to force it to land. I wasn't helping the dragon stay aloft either as the way I was positioned on it's back interfered with it flapping it's wings. The Fury lost control and we headed towards the mountain face. Toothless was still determined to down the dragon and shot out some more plasma balls in front of us.

I could hear Hiccup scold Toothless "What are you doing! Freya is on it's back!". I could see now that we were going to crash as I was interfering with it's wings too much. We crashed into a cave on the side of the mountain. Toothless, not stopping himself in time, shot his last plasma ball into the side of the mountain. The resulting avalanche buried the entrance of the cave and then I was in the dark. I was terrified by the realization that I wasn't alone.

## 17. Starfire

My eye's were useless. I had never known a truer dark than this. Nocturnal creatures would still have been frightened by the unforgiving void all around me. With my eyes not giving me any information of my surroundings I reached out with my ears. I could hear breathing. Not agitated or heavy breathing but calm. The Nightfury must have been knocked out by the fall.

"Ok, ok, ok. Your trapped in a cave with a dragon that's not going to be too happy with you when it wakes up. What do you do?" I talked to myself.

"Light! I need light, but how?" I asked myself. I then felt my clothing on my body. I ripped off my sleeve and placed it on the ground. I then searched the darkness for two good sized rocks. I smashed them against each other and I saw sparks. The sparks were almost blinding in the pure darkness. It took several tries but the cloth started to light. First there was smoke and then a little ember spread to make a flame.

"Yes!" I congratulated myself. I got my first look at my surrounding and immediately froze. Standing, not knocked out or constrained in any way, glaring at me was the Nightfury. It breathed a heavy breath out of it's nostrils and put out the flame. The darkness surrounded me again. I backed away as far as I could and I cringed when I heard the dragons movement through the cave. It was getting closer, realizing that I was defenseless. It must have been right in front of my face because I could feel it's hot breath on me. I crossed my arms in front of my face as a last defense but the dragon just knocked them aside with it's snout. I sniffed me and continued sniffing all around my body. It stopped when it got down to my left hip. The satchel!

"Ok ... you want the fish?" I asked.

The dragon made a huffing noise and I said shakily "Of ... course ...

you do.". I slowly moved my hand down to the satchel and opened it. The dragon was making different noises and I assumed that it was getting impatient. My hand went into the satchel and it touched something that was not fish. I grabbed the eel and pulled it out of the bag quickly. I could hear it retreating and making some whining noises.

"Ha. Whose the big scary dragon now." I said victoriously. I could then see a purple light form at the other side of the cave.

I ducked just in time and screamed "Whoa!" as the fireball hit near me. I was unscathed by the explosion and the purple fire burned on the rocks illuminating the cave.

The Nightfury was about to take another shot when I said "Whoa. Wait. Okay, I'm putting the eel away now.". I lowered it back into the satchel and pulled out a fish. The dragons expression softened. It sniffed the air and looked very curious. It must have been because the fish was smoked. I held out the fish and asked "Peace?". It pounced at me and snatched the fish out my of hand. I jumped back a little. The dragon finished it's snack and turned it's attention back to me.

"I'm sorry about making you crash!" I apologized, tentatively. The dragon just glared back at me and then stepped on the purple flames extinguishing the light.

"Come on!" I protested. The dragon just growled and I could here it move to the other side of the cave this time. It could obviously see me fine in the dark and it wanted to keep that advantage. I reached around in the darkness it try and find the sleeve that I had set ablaze earlier. I began hitting rocks above it and I heard the dragon moving again.

I stopped sparking the rocks and warned it with a hand on my satchel "I can bring out the eel again!".

The dragons movement stopped. I returned to sparking the rocks and an ember appeared on the cloth. I blew on it and it developed into a flame. I could see the Nightfury once more and it got up. I knew it was going to try to extinguish the flame again so I put my hand on my satchel. It reluctantly backed off and let me have my light. I looked over at the Dragon and it looked back over to me. It was very similar to Toothless. However, it was still in perfect health and was not missing part of it's tail. After I observed it for a little longer I saw that 'she' had several light blue and white freckles on her snout.

"Now I know why Toothless was chasing you so intently" I joked to myself. The Nightfury perked up it's head when it heard this. It then brought it's tail forward and collapsed the left side of its fins.

I smiled as I realized it understood me and continued "Yes Toothless was the dragon that was chasing you. His rider's name is Hiccup and my name is ...". I was interrupted as the dragon yawned loudly, displaying it's disinterest.

"Oh am I boring you. I didn't know you had better things to do." I said and the dragon gave out a soft rumble.  
>"Well, unless you can find another way out. We are going to be here

until they can dig us out." I said and the dragon groaned. Suddenly the dragons head perked up as if it remembered something and it made a similar roar to the one Toothless gave while we were chasing her. An awful ringing sound preceded it and she seemed to be very disturbed by the noise. After the sound subsided the Nightfury got up and disappeared behind a crease in the walls of the cave that I did not know was there. I was wondering if she actually found a way out when I heard her shooting at something. I grabbed my detached sleeve on the parts that were not burning and started moving to where the dragon disappeared. With my light moving around I could now see that this cave was honeycombed by smaller passages in the walls. I could probably fit through some of them and some were large enough to fit a dragon. Luckily I found the one the the Nightfury went down. It was stuck trying to fit into a passage that was too small for it.<p>

I giggled behind the dragon and said "Well it looks like you did have something better to do.". The dragon, now aware of my presence, squirmed extra hard to try to free itself.

"Calm down and let me help." I soothed and then I grabbed its tail. With the dragon relaxed I pulled and freed it from the tight space. As soon as it was free it threw me off it's tail and pinned me. It growled at me for a few second before it got off and extinguished my light again.

"Hey!" I yelled at the dragon as it bounded off to the main cave. It made a sound like laughter that echoed through the caves.

"You know I could fit through that hole if I could see." I yelled down the cave. I soon heard footsteps getting closer. Purple light illuminated the ground and the flames clung to the stone. I could see the dragon blocking the way back to the main cave. It slowly approached and started nudging me to the area it was stuck in.

"Alright. I already said I would go. Stop with the pushing" I said as I stood up. She didn't relent despite me asking her and she nudged me closer to the hole. I got down on all fours and easily fit through the gap she was stuck in earlier. The tunnel widened again and I saw the blast marks she made on the ceiling and there was an odd, clear stone that had fallen down.

I picked it up and turned around to see the dragon with it's mouth open providing light.

"Why do you want this rock?" I asked and it rolled its eyes and did that roar again. The stone vibrated and hummed in my hands. My light source was extinguished as the dragon was in distress and was not concentrating on lighting my way. Soon the noise stopped and the dragon provided me with light again.

"Alright, you want to get rid of it." I reasoned. I got back on all fours and crawled back through the opening, pushing the rock as I went. I stood up on the other side and saw the dragon was backing away from me now as it seemed scared of the rock. I walked towards her and repelled her back to the main cave.

I had noticed there was dirt under my feet and so I pointed down and commanded "Dig". The dragon looked annoyed that I was giving it orders and refused. I sighed and set the rock down and started

digging myself. As I was digging she grabbed the rock and through it against a wall and shot it twice. The rock broke apart a few times and so she roared again. There were several different buzzing noises coming from the bits of the rock now.

"That's not going to work!" I taunted as it was incapacitated from the noise. I had finished making a large enough hole and so I went and grabbed all the pieces. I placed them in the hole as the Fury watched. I then shoveled the loose dirt over them and then gestured to the Fury for it to do it's roar again. I could tell it didn't like being told what to do but it, reluctantly, roared again. There was no buzzing this time and the Fury's ears perked up. It's head darted to face an opening and it shot off into it.

"No no no. Please don't leave me here!" I pleaded. I was in darkness again without the Dragon. However, a light appeared down the opening the dragon had disappeared into. I got up and walked to the opening and saw that there were spots of purple flames stuck to the rocks marking my path. I followed them and it took me through a maze of underground tunnels. After a few minutes of walking through the tunnels I started hearing whimpering. I saw the Fury clawing at the sides of a tunnel that was, once again, too small for it to fit through. I could see light on the other side so this had to be the way out. It was desperately trying to widen the tunnel and was whimpering as it realized that it couldn't get out this way. I knelt next to it and put a hand on it's neck trying to calm it. It shrugged me off and growled. It then, somberly, moved away from the hole so that I could go through. I couldn't think of anything to do to help it so I crawled through the hole. As I got to the other side an idea struck me.

"Hey ... um ... dragon." I called back into the tunnel. It looked at me with distaste as it envied my freedom. "Block this tunnel off with your wing." I requested. It looked at me with the same look as when I asked it to dig. "Come on. When have I done anything other than to help you?" I asked. It's eyes looked at my satchel where the eel was. "Ok ... but other than that." I admitted. It rolled its eye's and got up to block the opening with its wing.

After it did I yelled into some of the other honeycombed passages "Over here!".

I heard a grunt from the dragon and then she took off following my voice. I went to check the opening to the outside for some fresh air and I coughed as the air was anything but fresh. I saw that the outside I thought was in fact the hollow inside of a dormant volcano. The air was hot and stunk with sulfur. I saw an opening in the top that actually led to the outside but there was no way to get through it without flying. This is when the Fury came crashing through a tunnel opening and slid across the rocks and hit it's head. It picked itself up and shook it's head. It saw the light and started pushing me out the opening.

"Whoa. Stop I'm going to fall!" I screamed and it relented, realizing that this was actually an entrance to the volcano. It then tilted it's head and motioned for me to get out of it's way.

"I don't think so." I protested "You are my only way out.". The dragon shook it's head violently at this and snorted. "Yes you are." I confirmed "I solved the rock problem and I helped you get here. You

owe me.". The dragon made some mocking sounds but eventually caved and lowered her head. I got into a position that would not interfere with her flight and she took off into the volcano and up through the hole in the top. Once outside the Nightfury landed and violently flipped me off of its back.

"Ow" I exclaimed as I hit a boulder and ended up in a sitting position with my back against it. The Nightfury stared at me and slowly approached until it was standing over me and sniffing. If it was going to eat me there was nothing I could do about it at this point. The only thing I could do was reach out my hand towards the dragons snout. I closed my eye's waiting for it to strike when it grumbled out of annoyance. There were a few more sniffs and then I felt something rub against my palm. I opened my eyes and saw her rubbing her snout against my hand and purring softly. I smiled in relief and moved my other hand to scratch under her chin. The purring got louder. I realized there were still two fish in the satchel and I put my hand in the bag. She immediately jumped back expecting the eel to come out again.

"It's okay. It's just fish. You hungry?" I cooed. I pulled out the two remaining smoked fish and through them to her. She snapped them out of the air. I decided to take out the eel and throw it into the opening of the volcano. I then pulled out some Dragon nip to coax her back over to me. She sniffed the air and started walking towards me. She curled up next to me and I held the grass next to her nose. Her pupils instantly widened and she snuggled her head next to me.

It was all going fine and then Hiccup had to ruin it all. Toothless spotted us on the volcano and they dived towards us. My Nightfury noticed the sound and got up and ready to attack.

"Freya get away from it!" Hiccup demanded.

"What are you doing Hiccup? Tell Toothless to back off." I replied standing between Toothless and my Fury.

"How did you get out?" He asked with concern still in his voice.

"We helped each other find a way though the caves. What were you doing not trying to dig me out?" I accused.

"I got Astrid and Stormfly on that and we went to scout if there was another way into the cave that might lead us to you." Hiccup said.

"Here calm him down" I said as I through him the satchel with some dragon nip remaining in it. I went over to my dragon and used the dragon nip to calm her and Hiccup did the same with Toothless. When we were all calm and the two Nightfurys got accustomed to each other Hiccup asked "So what are you thinking about naming her?".

"I don't know" I replied.

"How about ..." Hiccup started but I interrupted him.

"Not a chance Hiccup. I'm coming up with my own name." I said.

"What then?" he prompted.

I looked at her for any prominent features and saw the freckles on her snout looked like the stars above us. "Star..." I started and then I thought back into the caves and remembered the first nice thing she did for me, marking the path with "...fire".

"How about Starfire?" I stated.

## 18. Ownership

Hiccup got on the back of Toothless and I went to mount Starfire. As soon as I put one leg up she moved out from under me, knocking me to the ground. She turned around and made some laughing growls at this. Toothless made some growls to get her attention while I snuck up behind her.

I jumped on her back and said "I'm gonna be on your back one way or the other. So how about I get in a good position so we don't crash again.". After trying to buck me off she finally calmed down when she realized that I wasn't letting go. I used this opportunity to get in a riding position.

Toothless and Hiccup took off and Hiccup said "We should probably hurry back to Astrid. She was already kind of mad that I sped ahead of her back there and I don't think trying to clear the cave for longer than she has to will have put her in a better mood.". Hiccup departed and Starfire wasn't leaving.

"What's wrong? Why aren't you following them?" I asked. The dragon gave an annoyed huff and hit me in the face with her ear. She then looked back at me and glared. It was apparent that she really didn't like the idea of being ridden.

"There is more smoked fish where they're going." I tempted and she licked her lips and took off. It was very jarring as she clearly didn't have any sympathy for me when I was on her back. We followed Toothless and Hiccup to the avalanche site where we saw Astrid off of Stormfly as they were both wrenching rocks free from the mountainside and throwing them off the mountain. They were both too consumed in their work to notice the extra Nightfury against the black night sky.

I called out to them "Did someone get trapped in there?". Astrid turned and saw me on the back of Starfire and her jaw dropped.

"WHA', HOW, YOU'RE ON THE BACK OF A NIGHTFURY!?" Astrid said in shock.

"And it looks like you have been working hard to get me out. I didn't think you would miss me that much. Come on, let's get back to Berk. I'd rather not explain here and then again with everyone else in Berk and then twice more for the twins." I requested. Astrid stood there, frozen, for a few more seconds until Stormfly nudged her. She then mounted her and flew up to me and Hiccup.

"How long was I taking rocks off that pile when you were already free?" Astrid asked me. I knew she was in a horrible mood and would probably take it out on Hiccup.



I responded "I don't know but when Hiccup found us he turned around immediately to tell you.". Astrid saw right through my lie and reached out on Stormfly and hit Hiccup in the shoulder.

"That's for keeping me waiting." she said and then hit him again. "That's for putting me on rock clearing duty." she said angrily. She then flipped Stormfly over us and hit me on the back of the head. "And thats for lying to me." she finished with a smirk.

I rubbed the back of my head and Starfire chuckled at this until I said "Keep it up. The more you laugh the less fish you get.". She scowled and then she followed Hiccup and Astrid towards Berk. During the flight Starfire got really close to Toothless and held her position, looking over at the other Nightfury.

"Um ... Freya do you want to give us some room to fly?" Hiccup asked as Toothless looked back over to Starfire.

"I'd love to but she's not really letting me lead. She is kind of stubborn" I replied and both Astrid and Hiccup laughed. I joined them and Starfire moved her head around to examine why I was making that noise. I smiled back at her big purple eyes and I began to see the traces of her making a smile. Suddenly she went into a free-fall and I fell off her back. I screamed as I was falling alone through the night air. Starfire then came back to me and aligned herself under me so that I could get back on. When I had grabbed her again she didn't pull up but kept free-falling towards the ocean. She pulled up feet before the ocean and I could hear us spraying water everywhere as the shear force of the dive was disturbing the water. She then did a few rolls and leveled out. Her head looked back at me again with a full smile now.

After I got over the shock of what just happened I smiled back and accused "Show off!". I scratched her under her ear and then prompted "Lets see how high you can go". For once she actually agreed with me and started climbing in the air. We kept going up past the clouds until it was too cold and too hard to breathe to continue. When we dived back through the clouds we could see Hiccup and Astrid again and the lit torches of Berk. Starfire started growling and tensing up and I tried to comfort her by rubbing her neck.

"It will be okay. They are nice to dragons here." I cooed trying to calm her. It worked a bit but she never stopped tensing up. Joining back up with Toothless calmed her down even more. Luckily, it was late and no one was up around the town square to freak her out.

However, Stoick burst out of his house and yelled "Hiccup why are you back so ... THOR ALMIGHTY! Is that a Nightfury?!". He pointed at Starfire and she panicked.

"Easy. Easy Starfire." I cooed to Starfire. She stopped panicking but glared at the chief from behind me.

"Dad this is Starfire, Freya's new dragon." Hiccup explained. Starfire took offense to being called 'my dragon' so readily and roared at Hiccup.

"Looks wild to me." Stoick stated.

"Ya, I guess I should have emphasized new." Hiccup defended.

"Well if it's really 'ere to stay take it to the academy and get back 'ome. You come back here too Freya, I'd like to talk to ya about your persistent mission to make the chief lose his sleep." Stoick said, sternly.

"Actually, dad we landed here for a reason." Hiccup said.

Me and Astrid both asked "We did?" at the same time.

"Um ... I don't think that Starfire is going to like being locked in a pen at the academy so ... I think it would keep her calm if ... she stayed with her own kind for tonight." Hiccup said awkwardly. I was shocked and a little angry Hiccup kept this to himself until now. Toothless bounced up and down excitedly at this proposal while Starfire was maintaining her glare at the chief.

"If anything gets set on fire tonight your refurbishing the whole 'ouse Hiccup." said Stoick, caving to his proposal and walking back inside. Toothless was ecstatic and Starfire looked at the playful dragon in distaste. I walked up behind Hiccup and hit him in the arm.

"Ouch" Hiccup said with his back still towards me "Astrid why did you do ...". Hiccup realized his mistake of his assignment of blame and Astrid did as well.

"What gives you the right to dictate where my dragon goes?" I yelled and Starfire once again growled at the use of 'my dragon'. Out of rebellion from my statement she followed Toothless to the window of Hiccups house and entered to claim her bed.

"See, she thought it was a good idea too." Hiccup tried to defend.

I fronted on him and declared "You ... are ... not ... the master of all Nightfury's Hiccup.". I stormed off realizing as I left what the twins and Astrid felt when I was working with their dragons.

I could hear Astrid behind me talking to Hiccup "Really? Someone hit's you and you automatically think that it can't be anyone other than Astrid?".

Hiccup, bravely, responded "Well you have hit me more than you have done ... well ... most things.".

"You think so, do you!" said Astrid in her fierce voice. I listened for the inevitable thwack of Hiccup getting hit but I heard nothing. I peeked around to see what the delay was and saw Astrid grabbing Hiccup by his tunic and pulling him towards her with their lips locking them in each others embrace. Was I going crazy or was everyone else. I shook the strange image of them out of my head and continued to the Great Hall. I stayed up pacing for a while, still mad at Hiccup. Finally, I noticed how much my limbs ached from the tests and crashing into a cave. I stiffly entered my bed and instantly fell asleep.

I went from dreaming peacefully to eye's wide with shock in the morning. I was hit in my sore ribs with something heavy. Of course it would be her. Starfire made her way into the Great Hall and must have nudged me in the ribs.

"You are a real pain in my ..." I scowled at the dragon before Hiccup greeted me.

"Good morning." Hiccup greeted halfway from the entrance to my bed. I scowled at him still mad at him for last night and he said "You aren't still mad at me about last night are you? It's over, look Starfire is well rested and she didn't destroy anything. I'd say I made the right call.". Where is Astrid when you need her? She surely would have hit him for the cockiness of that statement. Then again she must have known that her actions last night would be likely to counteract her own purpose.

"Oh, keep talking and that anger is going to turn into hate." I said shooin Starfire away from my bed so I could get up.

"Hate! Well thats a little excessive, don't you think?" Hiccup replied still grinning.

"YOU practically claimed my ..." I started but stopped myself before I said 'my dragon', as Starfire was present, and continued "... Starfire as your own and didn't even give me a warning, let alone ask my opinion! Now, you have the nerve to bring her with you to rub it in!".

Hiccup looked taken aback for a few seconds and then apologized "I'm sorry. It's just, I've seen Toothless alone so long I thought that ...".

"Oh gods. Please tell me Toothless and Starfire didn't ..." I interrupted but I was interrupted myself.

"No!" Hiccup interjected and then concluded "No she actually stole his bed and he slept on the rafters but I don't think he really minded. I was going to say I've seen him without a family for such a long time I just ... couldn't think for anyone else but him just then. Like when we chased after her, leaving Astrid behind."

"I forgive you ... at least most of me dose. My pride still hates you." I said jokingly. "And my muscles hate Fishlegs, and my ribs hate Starfire, and most of me just generally hates Snotlout." I added making Hiccup smile. I then came up with a plan to wipe away the cockiness Astrid bestowed upon him last night.

"And my sense of feminine pride is shaking it head at Astrid." I stated very slyly, trying very hard to keep a strait face. Hiccup looked stunned and he looked at me and tried to gauge exactly what I meant by that.

"Why ... do you say that ... what did Astrid do?" Hiccup said very cautiously. I knew his shyness and awkwardness would make this conversation very painful for him.

"Oh it's nothing I just thought she would be more ... choosy ... with the times she is ... letting out her feelings." I teased.

Hiccup turned bright red as he softly said "You saw?".

"The whole thing lover boy! Astrid the fearsome hero. You the swooning maiden. You really need to practice your form a bit. You looked like a dead eel being coddled by a bear." I teased as loudly as I could.

Hiccup's cheeks were crimson now and he looked at me and croaked "Please stop.". Just then Starfire nudged me and made her impatient sound.

I was wondering if she was actually eager to start training until I realized "Oh. You want the fish I promised you. Alright lets go.". I left Hiccup standing in the Great Hall paralyzed by his own shyness. I walked over to the fish storehouse, where I got the fish for my Terror, and rummaged through it as Starfire waited outside. I returned with a rack of smoked fish with eight fish hanging off of it attached by twine.

I took one fish off and teased Starfire "You want your breakfast?" and I through it into the air. I was expecting Starfire to snap it out of the air but the fish just landed behind her.

"What, you don't want them anymore?" I asked looking down at the extremely annoyed Nightfury. It answered by snapping the rest of the dangling fish off of the rack. I through the rack back into the storehouse and then my Terror landed on my shoulder. Starfire growled at it and I gave it some scratches under the chin.

The Nightfury thought I was picking favorites and I teased "Well at least he listens to me. Watch, fetch.". I pointed to the fish that Starfire dropped and my Terror swooped off of my shoulder and brought it back to me. Starfire was not impressed but was disappointed when I didn't give her that fish and I fed it to my Terror. Starfire then flew off with a growl. Toothless, was watching us and watched her fly away. He then looked at me with an accusatory glare. I walked by him on my way back to the Great Hall for breakfast and said "She will be back. She likes the fish too much.". He bounced up and down when he heard this and started leaping on and off Hiccups house. I looked at him in awe for a moment. Then a somber thought came into my head which killed my happy mood. I wonder if I will be that happy if I ever meet someone from my tribe? I entered the Great Hall and got my breakfast and sat down across from Hiccup, who was the only other one at the table. He didn't strike up any conversation and avoided eye contact.

"Hiccup! By the gods, I was only teasing you. I think it is cute how you two can banter like that and still end up were you did." I finally spoke when it was apparent that he wasn't going to.

"Can you not tell anyone?" Hiccup asked. "I mean about the dead eel and ... maiden thing.".

I laughed at him which only turned him red again but I finished and said "Hiccup stop being so self-conscious. I just made that stuff up to make you feel bad.".

"Why?" he asked.

"One, for revenge for last night. Two, for not realizing your mistake

on your own. Three, for being so dam cocky when you tried to justify your actions." I explained. Hiccup was still red but slowly got his nerve back.

"Oh, by the way I didn't take Starfire to you to 'rub it in' she found you on her own and I just followed." Hiccup stated.

"Ya so she could have me get some smoked fish for her." I said disgruntled at the dragon that continually used me as a means to an end.

"Not exactly, she definitely smelled out where the fish storehouse was before she could smell you. She didn't just want the fish but she wanted your permission and for you to get them for her. It looks like Starfire is respecting you allot more than last night." Hiccup explained. I felt slightly guilty about how I acted at the storehouse earlier now. Soon all the other teens were sitting at the table and I told my story of how I was trapped in the cave and ultimately escaped with Starfire.

"I can't believe you found another Nightfury" Fishlegs said in awe.

"Where is she anyways?" Astrid asked.

"Um ... she kind of ... flew off." I said to everybody's surprise.

"We need to go after her." Hiccup stated, getting up from the table.

"Hiccup don't worry about it. She will be back, trust me she is just being stubborn and prideful." I said.

After our breakfast I told them I was going to make a saddle for Starfire. I went to Gobber's to make it but I had a harder time than I expected. In exchange for the leather, Gobber had me make five new shields, eleven axe heads, and various other tools and supplies for everyday use but most of them were for construction. Finally, he let me start on the saddle for Starfire.

"So you got yourself a Nightfury did ya." Gobber commented as I was scraping the leather.

"Well 'got' is a strong word. It's more like sparked a mild interest in me and now she wakes me up so I can get her smoked fish." I admitted.

Gobber chuckled and said "Well I don't doubt that. I think thats how Hiccup told me it was with Toothless. Even with the humbling experience of needing his prosthetic, Toothless through Hiccup clean off him the first few times he tried to ride him.".

"Really, then how come you are still so brash after loosing two limbs?" I joked taking in the information.

"Everyone has a part of themselves they can live without and those they can't lose. For me, I think I would much rather lose the rest of my limbs than my memories." He jabbed back.

"Oh right I already know what humbles you. Tell me, did you hop or roll all the way to the Great Hall while you were stuck in that bola" I teased back.

"If you don't let that event die I'm gonna ..." Gobber tried to threaten but I cut him off.

"What? Get trapped in another bola coming after me and roll at me very fast." I laughed.

"Forgive me lass but for someone who was publicly embarrassed by Astrid a few days ago, one of my previous trainees, you seem to be putting yourself in a high standing when thinking of evading a seasoned battle veteran." jabbed Gobber. I laughed knowing that this contest of insults would go on for a long time if we didn't stop.

"See this is why I'm not your apprentice Gobber. I've been here for two hours and we are already talking with insults and threats. Imagine a whole day." I stated.

"I don't want to lass. You were right, it would end very badly." Gobber concluded and went back to his work and I to mine. I finished the saddle and walked it over to the academy. I glared at the black scaled dragon I found there.

"Oh, you came back did you?" I scolded and Starfire turned her head to see me. When she saw the saddle in my hands, she got a very skeptical look on her face and sniffed at the air trying to determine exactly what it was.

"Yep, this is a saddle and we are going flying." I said sternly to the dragon. It backed away as I approached it. I chased after it all around the arena but she playfully, and resiliently bounded everywhere I was not. I was getting angry and the other riders were not helping.

"Your going to treasure this moment when you look back on this in the future." Hiccup said coyly as he watched the ridiculous sight of me chasing my dragon with a saddle. I broke down and fell against the stone wall. I curled into a little ball and cried with my face buried in my knees.

"The one ... good thing ... that happened ... to ... me since ... I ... got here ... and she ... hates ... me ... me ... so much." I sobbed uncontrollably into my knees.

"Is she crying?" Snotlout said with disgust as the whole group had stopped to watch me. Starfire's expression had softened and was now moving towards me and was crooning to try to comfort me.

"Um ... should we do something?" Fishlegs asked the rest of the group. Starfire was nudging me and I was unresponsive in my little ball. She then wrapped her tail around me and snuggled next to me trying to comfort me.

"Wait for it ..." Hiccup instructed the group, having seen this behavior before from me.

"Gotcha!" I exclaimed quite excitedly. I sprang out of my little ball

and slapped the saddle on Starfire. I secured two straps before she realized what happened. She sprang up and looked around at the saddle now, mostly, secured to her and looked back at me and roared.

"Yes. Looks like the big bad Nightfury is taking me flying after all." I bragged. Starfire didn't resist anymore as I secured the rest of the straps. She simply wore the most disappointed looking face I had ever seen on any living being.

"Oh come on. It can't be that bad, taking your human on a flight." I tried to reconcile with her. She noticed when I called myself 'her human' and nuzzled me as a sort of forgiveness.

I mounted her and whispered into her ear "Just so I know your not going to be pouting through our whole flight I'll make you a deal. If you can throw me off, and catch me ... the catching part is very important, this time I'll give you a back-rub for an hour when we land.".

Starfire looked back at me with a glint in her eye. She launched off the ground and out of the arena at, what I'm sure was, her fastest speed.

## 20. Promotion

Two weeks after the discovery of Starfire

"It looks like they have been getting smarter and they know our tactics." Astrid observed as the four raider ships below us were spread out away from each other.

"Well, dropping rocks from the sky isn't all that subtle. They were bound to figure out a way to make it harder for us." I stated.

"Fishlegs what time is it?" Hiccup asked and Fishlegs looked at a portable sundial on his saddle.

"Three hours and forty minutes past midday." Fishlegs responded.

I was silent for a few seconds while I crunched the numbers in my head. I was pulling some knotted twine out of my saddle bags when I asked "That's ... thirty ... seven knots at this height, right?".

Fishlegs was struggling to keep a log book open at the speed we were flying but he eventually corrected "Thirty-nine to be exact.". I counted out thirty-nine knots on the twine and through the end of the rope over to Fishlegs.

"Make sure you lead them allot. They are at full sail." I cautioned.

"Fishlegs, aim for the right most ship. Freya, you and Starfire got that one. Everyone else, space yourself out on Freya's left to get the other ships." Hiccup commanded.

As we positioned ourselves, keeping the string tight between me and Fishlegs, Snotlout complained "Why is it that Fishlegs and Meatlug

are the ones who aren't carrying tons of rocks. His dragon doesn't light on fire when she is stressed."

"Because Meatlug has the shortest body length which means we can't attach as many rocks to her." Hiccup explained.

"If you and Hookfang aren't strong enough to carry all those rocks we can lighten the load next time." Astrid said trying to appeal to his bravado.

"No, we could carry more rocks if we needed too." Snotlout said while Hookfang lit on fire for a second at the prospect of having to carry more rocks. Meatlugs shadow was now on the rightmost ship and Hiccup prepared to give the order. He led his shadow into the waters in front of the ship.

Hiccup commanded with his hand in the air "Wait for it ... Wait for it ... NOW!". We all pulled our rope but the twins fought over who got to pull on it for a while before they released their rocks. Fishlegs was able to fly back over to the rest of us and hand me back the twine before the rocks hit. The sea all around three of the ships turned white and we heard the tell tale clap that was created when the rocks hit the deck of a ship. The leftmost ship wasn't even scathed as we could see the volley of rocks that the twins had dropped had fell harmlessly into the sea hundreds of feet ahead of the fourth ship.

Hiccup sighed but then said "Well three out of four is not bad.". I looked over at Astrid, Snotlout, and the Twins and saw them all looking back at me as they were thinking the same thing. I nodded at Snotlout for him to be ready for the signal.

"So ... Hiccup when we get back can you give me some tips on how to stay streamlined during a ... a ... um ... I forgot the name for it. You know when you fall downwards trying to gain as much speed as possible. " I asked hoping he wouldn't catch on to what I was trying to do.

"You mean a dive, of course I ..." Hiccup started but was interrupted by Snotlouts war-cry.

"You heard him everyone, dive" Snotlout exclaimed acting like that was the only word he heard and dived Hookfang toward the remaining ship.

The twins complied and joined him while Astrid said innocently "Looks like we are going to have to make sure he doesn't get himself killed.". When Hiccup looked back at me with a frown I just shrugged and took Starfire into a, perfectly streamlined, dive to lead the attack. We had all practiced this without Hiccup as we were all getting tired of his over-dependance on the dropping rocks strategy and we wanted some action. When we got into range we all unleashed a volley of fireballs into the ship and then swarmed around it in our predetermined paths. The raiders tried shooting back at us but our non-symmetrical interweaving paths around the ship made it next to impossible for them to aim. Soon enough the ship started to sink from the constant barrage of fireballs. I turned my attention to all the survivors in the water from all four ships. I activated the modifications I had made to the net that was hanging off of Starfire and flew low over the water, scooping up the survivors. It didn't



take long until I had a large ball of terrified men caught in my net. I flew to a sea stack and opened the net dropping them all on top of it. I made sure my necklace with my seal on it was showing before I had Starfire land on the stack.

The men were all screaming in fear and begging for their lives so I asked Starfire "Could you get their attention?". She roared at all the men and they all fell dead silent.

"Now, do any of you recognize us?" I said in a commanding voice. They were all frozen in fear and were unable to respond. "I said DO YOU RECOGNIZE ANY OF US." I shouted trying to show my necklace as much as possible. My heart fluttered when one of the men held up his hand.

I nodded for him to answer and he said "You are the dragon riders of Berk.". I sighed and mentally kicked myself for getting my hopes up.

"That's right we are the riders of Berk and we just destroyed all of your ships" Snotlout said, enthusiastically, from behind me. I turned to see that all the other riders had landed and were watching me.

"So if you ever make it off of this rock and somehow reconnect with friends or family in the raiding or pirating business, what are you going to tell them." I scolded. Nobody answered so I answered for them "For one you should advise them to get a real job but the one thing you will beg them to do is stay far, far away from Berk.". They all nodded and I took off with Starfire. The rest of the group, including Hiccup and Fishleg's, joined me.

Hiccup moved Toothless up next to me and asked "What was that back there Freya?".

"What, you gave the order to dive and we did." I said smugly.

"No I didn't and we will talk about you undermining my authority later. I was talking about questioning those men." Hiccup said with concern in his voice.

"I wasn't questioning them, I was just making sure that we have less pirates or raiders to ..." I said but I was cut off by Hiccup.

"I know what you were trying to do. I know that you want to find your family but do you really want to find out that ..." Hiccup reasoned but I answered before he could finish his sentence.

"Yes! I would rather know that they are dead, or enslaved, or pirates, or living peacefully somewhere than wondering about the millions of possibilities over and over." I snapped back. Hiccup retreated and I said "Look, I'm sorry I snapped at you but I don't feel like talking about this with anyone.". We soon got back to Berk and we let our dragons rest for the day. We had a few meals in the Great Hall and everyone left to go back home. With nothing to do I decided to go to Hiccup's house to visit Starfire. When I got to the house I saw Astrid leaning against the door and listening to a conversation inside. I decided not to blow her cover and I stood listening at the door as well.

"... I don't know what to do dad, they all disobeyed me but it was

the right call. How can I maintain a chain of command when I've got people that are becoming just as knowledgeable and capable as me." we heard Hiccup.

"Well in a normal case of disobedience among soldiers, you would simply discipline them when they disobey. But in your case I think there is something different going on." Stoick replied.

"Oh come on, I know that tone of voice. It's not my fault they disobeyed ... right?" Hiccup retorted.

"It is and it isn't." Stock said.

"Dad you were never good with cryptic wordplay so just stick with your normal tough, strait to the point, disappointed, scowl. Your messing with my head." Hiccup said frankly.

We could tell Stoick took a second to give his son a look for that comment by the pause in conversation. Stoick then asked his son "Do you remember how you got the Dragon academy?".

"You gave it to us after ..." Hiccup started warily and then paused long enough to make Stoick take over.

"After you disobeyed me and used your dragons to help the town instead of locking them away like I ordered. You did what was best even though it was against your orders and I rewarded you for it. A good leader can recognize if someone is becoming disobedient because they are capable of taking on more responsibility. If they are, it is usually the right idea to trust them and give them a promotion." Stoick explained. Me and Astrid both smiled at the idea of a promotion.

"Ok ... but promotion to what? We don't exactly have ranks." Hiccup asked.

"The ranks aren't important, what is important is that that person is capable enough of making their own decisions so that they only need leadership every once in a while, like you." Stoick said prideful of his son.

"Oh man this is going to be tough and possibly painful. I need to know that Astrid knows the full reason behind the promotion before it gets out." Hiccup said. Astrid almost exploded with joy and I gave a silent clap as she bowed. She then shooed me off so that she could enter and receive her promotion. I hid behind the corner of the house and Astrid knocked on the door. After she entered I went back to the door to listen.

"... good your here, I want to talk to you about something." Hiccup said and I could hear them both sit down.

"What about?" Astrid asked, perfectly masking her earlier excitement.

"Well ... the thing is ... I've decided to give someone a promotion and you were the first one to come to mind. You have been extremely loyal and showed that you can handle yourself with tasks on your own. Because of this ..." Hiccup explained but was cut off by Astrid.

"Yes. Of course I will take the promotion and you better think up an awesome rank." Astrid accepted with her previous excitement.

"Oh gods. Why dose everyone interrupt in this village. Astrid because your loyal and your sole motivation is to protect Berk is why I want to give the promotion to Freya." Hiccup stated. Hiccup then continued his explanation "Freya is trustworthy but she is not loyal. I know you guys planned that attack together but the part when she scooped up all the survivors and questioned them had nothing to do with the protection of Berk. I need her to take on a different set of responsibilities that are in line with her own motivations. It's not that your not ...". Hiccup was stopped by Astrid. I knew she assumed that I was listening to this entire conversation. I was embarrassed and hurt but I stood my ground at the door. It opened and I saw Astrid holding the door. Hiccup's cheeks paled at the realization that I was listening this whole time.

"Freya, I ..." Hiccup started but I put my hand up and shook my head.

"When I decided to stay here" I said in an eerily calm voice that made everyone in the room shiver "I did so thinking that it would be a lot safer and more productive to search for my tribe with people I could trust, rather than alone. If that is no longer true and you are actively trying to stop me from getting answers then I think it would be best if I left Berk."

## 21. Eclipse

Everyone was silent. Starfire and Toothless came downstairs and were shocked when everyone seemed to have been made into statues.

Astrid was the one who spoke first "Freya. You would leave us just like that?".

"It would be impossible for any of you to understand. I am very grateful for your generosity and friendship but I can't live like this forever. I can't live the rest of my life knowing there could be someone spending their's searching for me." I said.

"Freya that's not what I meant at all." Hiccup started his speech a little shaky "I didn't mean that I wanted to stop you from searching. I actually wanted to put you in charge of exploring and researching dragons.". He continued "I don't want to make it so that it is impossible for you to find your family with your job. I wanted to use your motivation to find your family to motivate you with your new responsibilities.".

"Explain." I said entering the house and sitting down.

"Well ... one of your responsibilities would be researching dragons and to do that you would need to travel to the said dragons habitat and study or train them. This would allow you to venture out and visit other tribes and search for any sign of your past.".

I sat there for a minute and contemplated Hiccups proposal and then said "Ok".

"Ok what?" Stoick asked.

"Ok I'll take the promotion." I said, my mood lightening.

Hiccup sighed in relief and turned to his father and said "This is why we should have soundproofed that door a long time ago."

"So do I get a rank?" I asked trying to defuse the tension. Astrid scowled at me, hating the idea that I might outrank her.

Hiccup noticed Astrid's demeanor and said "If you were listening that whole time, you would have heard that ranks are not important.". Astrid's glare intensified and so I decided not to press the matter. Astrid left in an unhappy mood and I spent a few hours visiting Starfire. Me and Hiccup discussed the specifics of what I would be responsible for and when and how I would do them. I stayed the night sleeping on the Haddock's bench as I had several times before in the last few weeks. Starfire was getting more friendly with Toothless and she would refuse to sleep outside of the Haddock residence. There wasn't much we could glean out of Starfire's past but by her behavior it was apparent that Toothless was the only other Nightfury she had seen either. Astrid didn't like it when I stayed over so in the mornings she would always come and barge in Hiccup's door and wake us both up early for dragon training, although I think that she was ensuring distance between us. I could understand why, Hiccup was as enthralled at the presence of another Nightfury as Toothless and we often spent allot of time together as our two dragons would seek each other out.

Sure enough, the next morning someone barged in the front door.

I didn't even open my eyes to check that it was her when I greeted "Good morning Astrid.". Starfire was curled up beside the bench and acted like a stove, radiating heat, the entire night.

To my surprise the voice of a young boy yelled "Chief!". This got everyone in the hut to get out of bed.

Stoick sprang out of his bed and instinctually grabbed his axe and yelled "What is it? Are we under attack? Speak Gustav!".

"The sun is dying!" the boy screamed in a very panicked voice. Out of instinct to protect his people Stoick marched out the door to attempt to cure the sun of it's mortal predicament. Hiccup ran down the stairs and gave me a quizzical look but I just shrugged and got off the bench. We both got outside to see that the sun had a black center. I was shocked at the sight but Stoick and Hiccup started laughing.

"What is wrong with you two?" I asked thinking that the sun was indeed dying.

"It's an Eclipse!" Stoick barked out in laughter. I wasn't getting it.

Hiccup saw my confusion and explained to both me and this Gustav boy "The moon is just casting it's shadow on the sun. It will be over in a few hours.".

"Well I guess they don't have 'Eclipses' where I'm from or I would

know the word." I said with my tension easing.

Hiccup explained turning around "I wouldn't count on that. Eclipses don't happen very often. This is the first one I've even seen, I've only read about them from a book Fishlegs gave me."

Just then Fishlegs came running towards Hiccups house and screaming. When he got to us he was too out of breath to speak but he frantically pointed to the eclipse.

Hiccup almost started laughing as he said "Fishlegs it's just an eclipse. You should know that better than anyone.". Fishlegs, who was still out of breath, grabbed Hiccup by the shoulders and turned him away from the sun and pointed out into the early morning sky. There, far away from the sun, was a crescent moon about to disappear from the horizon. Hiccup immediately had a look of fear on his face as he realized what this meant.

"Dad!" Hiccup called over to Stoick who turned to see the moon "Sound the horn."

Stoick was stunned for a second but then replied "We don't even know what this is. I'm not causing panic."

Stoick continued to look at his sons face and they both realized what it was when Hiccup said "... Dragon". There was a unidentifiable roar that sounded like someone was using bellows to blow through a flute. The shadow then left the sun and flew high into the air. It was impossible to judge how big or far away it was as darkness rippled all around it, consuming all light that was near it. It flew right above us and grew larger and larger. Then a powerful wind swept through the village. The wing caused by its hovering put so much force on me that I was forced to take a knee. Then came the terrible, wheezing roar again. After it finished I looked up to see several houses that had fires erupting from their torches. Suddenly, there was an explosion and I looked up to see a Nadder shooting fireballs at the shifting dark shape above us. Then a gust pushed down on us with enough force to push me onto all fours. The gusts died down and I got up to see the dark shape leaving in the direction of Dragon Island.

Astrid landed after scaring it away and asked "Hiccup! Are you alright?". She rushed over to him who like me was hunched over from the massive gusts of wind.

"Ya Astrid I'm fine" Hiccup said as she helped him up. Fishlegs was still curled up on the ground and I don't think I ever saw Stoick go down but he would have ben unable to move from the powerful gusts that were upon us.

"Is that one you just forgot to put in the book of dragons because I don't remember reading about that one?" I asked Hiccup mostly as Fishlegs was still incapacitated on the ground.

"No we've never seen that one before." Hiccup said with a frightened look on his face.

"Hiccup! Get your dragons saddled and ready to put out those fires." Stoick commanded as he gestured to all of the small fires that had erupted out of Berk's torches. Hiccup got up and looked at all the

fires in bewilderment. We then got Fishlegs up and flew over to the academy.

As we were fitting the fire control saddles to our dragons Hiccup asked "Did anyone see it shoot?".

"I was a little more concentrated on the soul crushing void it surrounded itself with." Fishlegs said with lots of fear in his voice.

"All those fires just started from our torches after it roared." I said. Everyone shivered when they remembered that horrible sound the dragon made. Before we left Snotlout and the twins came to the academy on their dragons and Hiccup instructed them to help with putting out the fires. A few of the fires were extinguished by the towns people and some had grown much larger. After the fire, only one home was completely burnt and a few others had some repairs needed. We unsaddled our dragons from the firefighting gear and put the normal saddles on.

"Where to now?" Astrid asked Hiccup. Hiccup just stared into space for a few seconds, like I've seen him before, weighing his options.

He finally responded "We need to get to know this thing if it comes back. We are going to Dragon Island to scout this dragon so we can better defend against it in the future."

"We are actually going towards the giant black ball of death?" Fishlegs asked timidly.

"Come on Fishlegs do you really want to sit around here and wait for it to come back with no idea what it is or how to defend against it?" I asked him.

"Er ... um ... gee ... No." Fishlegs responded.

"Alright, travel light but arm yourself. We may end up having to fly away or fight it." Hiccup cautioned. I had been practicing shooting a bow off of Starfires back and so I armed myself with a bow and arrows. We took off and I got a glimpse of Stoick looking confused as to why we were leaving before we got over the open seas.

"Yes. Finally me and Hookfang get some action. What type of dragon are we attacking again? I kind of slept through the attack." Snotlout stated.

Astrid rubbed her hand down her face and asked "How do you sleep through a dragon attack when its wings create enough wind to make a hurricane jealous?".

"First of all Snotlout we are not attacking it. We just need to get a proper look at it so we can try to defend against it. Second of all HOW DID YOU SLEEP THROUGH THAT!?" Hiccup stated.

"Hey it takes a lot of energy to move all this muscle around all day." Snotlout replied arrogantly.

Hiccup then turned his questioning towards Astrid and asked "How were you able to take off under the downdraft of its wings?".

"Oh I was already out taking a flight with Stormfly, you know taking in the morning air." she replied, unconvincingly.

I chimed in and said "You were mad you didn't get the promotion and couldn't sleep so you went flying didn't you.".

"What thats ... thats ..." Astrid started but she realized that she couldn't convince us otherwise and stopped, pouting on the back of her dragon.

I then turned to Hiccup and said "Hiccup you have got to promote her to something fast.".

He nodded in agreement and then we flew the rest of the way to Dragon Island in silence.

Before we even saw the island we could hear it's roar.

"How can it already know that we are here?" Astrid asked.

"It couldn't ... it must be roaring at a another dragon on the island." Fishlegs said. As we got closer and closer to the island we could see that there was a bright light illuminating the fog around it.

"Whoa. Did this dragon just set the whole island on fire. I'm beginning to like this thing." Tuff commented. When we broke through the clouds we could see that the island was not on fire but there was the dragon in all of it's shiny glory.

"Wait I thought you said that the dragon that attacked Berk was all dark" Snotlout stated

Fishlegs's dread turned into excitement now as he said "It must be like a Skrill. It can take in and redirect sunlight instead of lightning. It must have been taking it in in the morning and now it is redirecting it.".

"Alright Fishlegs use my spyglass and break down what weaknesses this thing might have." Hiccup said as he tossed his spyglass over to Fishlegs.

"All right." Fishlegs said while catching the spyglass "Obviously it has the powers to take in and redirect light which either way shouldn't be too dangerous to us, I'll give it +2 firepower. It really is massive and looks to be about half the size of the Red death in body mass and hight but just bigger than it if you count the wing size and span. I would recommend not staying underneath it while it's in flight. Larger wingspan also adds +40 to it's speed. Four legs, very typical, two hind have inverted knees and the two front have normal joints. Not very large limbs considering it's overall size but I'd still give it +25 attack. Moderate to heavy armor all over it's body, all clear scales with white edges. Clear crest over its head that reaches all the way down along the side of it's snout. Hello! No mouth or teeth.".

"What!? Fishlegs I think you have been staring at the bright dragon for too long." Snotlout said.

"No, there are more than a dozen holes in two columns down it's neck but there are no teeth or a mouth." Fishlegs added.

"Great we know it can't eat us but are there any weak spots that we can exploit if it comes to crush, claw, or bludgeon us." Hiccup asked.

"As I said it is pretty well armored so the only weak areas are on it's wings and I don't think we should attack them." Fishlegs said.

"Why not I always hit Tuff where he is already bruised and that works on him." Ruff stated.

"Because we want it to use it's wings to fly far away from us. Dragon Island is still too close for comfort." Hiccup explained.

Fishlegs was looking at the dragon again through the spyglass as he said "Hiccup I'd like to add two things to my observations. One, it is looking right at us and two, I think I know what class of dragon it is."

We all looked down to see the dragon now looking at us. However, the more alarming sight was the pack of roughly a dozen wild dragons from various species flying up at us.

"It's an Alpha! Run!" Fishlegs screamed as he started to retreat back to Berk.

**\*\*Author's Note: Hi guys sorry for the recent lack of uploads. I have gotten to a part of the story where I'm beginning to think about certain scenes farther down the line. I've been busy writing down my ideas for these scenes and even the stories conclusion.\*\***

## 22. Alpha

Me, Hiccup, and Astrid needed to distract the pack giving us chase as the other riders dragons were not as fast. Fishlegs and the twins were falling behind and the pack was closing in on them. A wild Nadder clutched at Barf and Belch's tail and took them into a dive. Astrid used Stormfly's spikes to shoot the Nadder off of them. There was no respite for us as a group of three Terrors were converging on Fishlegs and a Monstrous Nightmare was continuing the Nadder's assault on the twins. Toothless shot the Terrors away from Fishlegs and Astrid continued covering the twins. There were still several other dragons behind them and they were closing in fast.

"Come on, let's thin the herd." I said to Starfire as we attacked the bulk of the pursuing herd. Starfire shot a few plasma balls into the group so we could get their attention. All but a few of the dragons turned their attentions to me.

I quickly shouted to the other riders "Keep heading back to Berk. I'll lead them away.". I quickly dived gaining the speed needed to outrun the rest of the dragons. We pulled up just before the water and I looked behind to see several of the wild dragons crash into the water. We were easily outrunning the dragons but we decided to disappear into a fog belt in some sea stacks for good measure. Starfire flew through them and I took out my bow. Using a special



arrow I had made I shot at one of the stacks and attached the rope that followed from it to Starfire's saddle. We were dangling off one of the stacks and we heard the rest of the dragons dart past us in the fog. I took a moment to look down at Starfire and I giggled at what I saw. Her entire body was limp and, with her full weight on the saddle, her forelegs were pushed up to her chin together. She looked up at me with annoyance that I had laughed at her.

"Well, do you want to hang out for a while or should we get back to the others?" I asked jestingly. Starfire responded by shooting a plasma blast at my arrow, destroying all hopes I had of retrieving it. We continued to fly through the fog belt but outside of the sea stacks to make our way back. The fog started to get lighter and I thought we were about to leave it behind. However, the fog continued to grow unnaturally brighter. Soon we broke through the fog only because a large section had been blown away from the wings of the Alpha.

"Move it Starfire." I said in a panic and she gained speed. We dived under it which was a bad idea. With a few flaps of its wings we were completely out of control. The wind howled in my ears as Starfire tried to level out. We finally broke free of the Alpha's downdraft and Starfire began to pick up speed. I looked back to see the massive dragon dissipating whole clouds with the flapping of it's wings. Despite it's massive size it was keeping pace with us.

"Come on Starfire we need to find a way to get this thing off our tail. Up!" I suggested. Starfire kept climbing until the air was too thin for us to stay at this height for long. I looked behind us and the Alpha was still in pursuit.

"This isn't working. We've got to change it up. Dive!" I commanded. We dived through the clouds and then looped upwards. The Alpha seemed to be able to see through the clouds as it leveled off it's own dive. However it lacked the maneuverability to cut us off and we flew above it in the opposite direction. We quickly turned around and followed behind the Alpha. Now that we were chasing it we had to deal with how uncomfortable it was to look at as it was radiating light.

"Alright. Stay behind it and ... I cant look at anything other than the tail for two seconds so let loose at it's tail. Lets see if it will back off like it did in Berk." I instructed and Starfire began rhythmically shooting plasma blasts at the Alpha's tail. I armed myself with the bow and shot at it as well. The arrows would be nothing be but an annoyance as they would bounce off the thick scales and, every once in a while, one would prick the unarmored mussels near the wings before falling down into the ocean. It tried turning around but it was too sluggish to get us out from behind it. After a long barrage that seemed to do no damage to it, what so ever, the Alpha dived to evade us.

"Yes! Now let's head back to Berk." I said excitedly. We dived back through the clouds and I saw the Alpha had landed in the water with its wings stretched out. It was just floating there, glaring at us as we left. Suddenly the large crest on it's head started glowing brighter than the rest of it's body.

"Starfire! Evasive maneuvers!" I instructed as I brought my head forward as Starfire dived and twirled. Seconds later me and Starfire were enveloped in light. Even though I was not looking at it, the

reflection off of Starfires scales forced me to close my eyes. The blast wouldn't be hot enough to even begin to melt metal but, against my clothes, it was scalding. After around fifteen seconds of the intense light it relented. My back burned from the heat. I smelled my clothes smoldering and the heat persisted.

"Ow ... ow ... Starfire ... water please ... hot ... ouch." I stated and Starfire dived into the ocean to extinguish my smoldering clothing. I got back to Berk just as they were about to fly back to get me.

"I think you should add a few points to firepower Fishlegs" I said after landing Starfire in the academy. All of my clothes were soaked and steam was coming off of my back.

"Freya what happened to you?" Hiccup asked.

"Well lets just say it can do allot more than just get a little shiny with the sunlight it collects." I said grabbing some ice that was on hand and rubbed it under my shirt on my back.

"The alpha came after you? How did you get away?" Astrid asked.

"By attacking it. I got behind it and started to barraged it with arrows and plasma. It is fast in the air but, without tail fins, it is very sluggish when trying to turn. I guess we got on it's nerves enough because it landed and let us go. But not without a parting gift." I said gesturing to my back.

"That is awesome. Oh ... I got a name for it Lasering-back-big-wing dragon." Tuff said before being hit by his sister.

"Naming it isn't really important right now. What we need to find out is how we can drive an Alpha far away from us." Hiccup said.

"What's the big deal. Hiccup dealt with the Red Death one on one. Just do whatever you did last time." Snotlout stated.

"Snotlout, last time he nearly dyed and he lost his leg. Hiccup is not fighting another Alpha by himself." Astrid dictated. Everyone was silent for several seconds as they let the intensity of Astrid's commands sink in.

Fishlegs then spoke up "Actually I don't think it is as powerful as the Red Death. I mean it can't breathe fire and there were only around a dozen dragons that attacked us. There are many more than just a dozen dragons on Dragon Island and I don't think it could control more than that."

"Speaking of controlling other dragons, how come it didn't just take control of our dragons" Astrid asked.

I replied saying "I don't think it can take control of trained dragons but I think it can still sense them. When I was trying to get behind the Alpha I dropped through a cloud and I should have been invisible to it. But when I looped around, it already knew what I was doing and tried to cut us off. I don't think we can trick or hide from this thing.". "Oh and Fishlegs, it may not effect dragons but it still has enough firepower to cause some damage to a rider." I scolded, still soothing my burnt back with the ice.

"I don't think we have to fight it. It could have crushed Berk if it just landed but it didn't. It left when Astrid attacked it and sent other dragons to chase us away so it may not be interested in fighting." Hiccup stated.

"Um ... your leaving out the part where it purposely shot at me and set my back on fire." I reminded Hiccup.

"Only after you attacked it." Hiccup pointed out.

"Hiccup are you seriously thinking that an Alpha can be tamed?" Astrid asked him.

"We don't have to tame it, we just have to make peace with it." Hiccup said.

"But you can't just ..." Astrid started but was interrupted by a wheezing roar.

"Everyone back on your dragons." Hiccup commanded and we all mounted our dragons and took off. The Alpha was immediately visible on the horizon and was headed strait for Berk. We were hovering over the town waiting for Hiccup to rejoin us after explaining that no one is to fire a catapult unless it breaks past us. Hiccup rejoined us and we waited for the Alpha to close in. It became apparent that it didn't bring any escorts with it as it got closer and hovered in front of us. After a few seconds of observing us the Alpha descended and landed just outside of town, crushing a few trees in the forrest while doing so.

"Alright, I'm going to go down there and meet it. DON'T attack unless something happens." Hiccup said.

"Hiccup, you don't ..." Astrid started but he was already diving down. Toothless landed far away from the Alpha and Hiccup dismounted him. He told Toothless to stay and Hiccup approached the gigantic dragon. I could see Hiccup doing his usual routine when trying to tame a dragon. First talking it down, then sticking out his hand. We all waited to see if the dragon would meet him. After several tense seconds the dragon began lowering its head. Hiccup was still a ways away from the lowered head of the Alpha and so he began to walk forward until something different was happening with the dragons head. It was shining in an odd way and then we could see something fall off from behind it's crest. It was hard to see with all the light coming off the dragon. The fallen object then grew taller and started to define itself. It had two legs, two arms, and was shining brightly as it's plate armor reflected the Alpha's light. There, standing in front of Hiccup, was the rider of the Alpha.

## 23. Void

Hiccup put his hand down. It was hard to see the other rider's face but it was a safe bet to assume he was staring at Hiccup as intently as Hiccup was at him. The shining metal armor he wore covered his torso, arms, and his legs. His head had a leather hood overtop of it and a mask covering his mouth. He was armed with a bow that was hung across his torso and two swords on each of his hips. The Alpha now raised it's head and turned it's attention to the rest of us. Hiccup

signaled us and we dived down to land and stay with Toothless. Without warning the Alpha roared again. However it's body language denied the fact that it roared at all. After a few seconds the breath expelled from it's roar hit us. It did not smell like fish, but that was not surprising as it didn't even have a mouth to eat them. The breath had an unexpected effect on me. As I breathed it in my mind felt clearer and my mussels relaxed. Seconds later there were shouts and yells from behind us. Any lit fires around this area of the village had erupted into much larger flames.

"The beast is trying to burn us. FIRE THE CATAPULTS." Stoick commanded and a volley of rocks flew towards the Alpha. It saw the rocks and I expected it to reveal some secret defense against the mortars that would make it even more unbeatable. However, the Alpha used it's enormous wingspan to shield itself and it's rider. The rocks hit it and were generally ineffective. The Alpha roared and winced in pain at each rock that hit it but it was, overall, undamaged. After the barrage the Alpha kept itself enclosed in it's wings for some time.

During this time Stoick ordered "Reload!". The wings of the Alpha began to unravel and everyone stopped to look at the dragon in dread. It's wings fully expanded outwards to reveal it's rider now aiming his bow at Hiccup. Toothless made a sound of panic and the rider let the arrow fly out of the bow.

Even more terrifying than the Alpha's roar was Astrid's scream at the sight of the arrow hitting Hiccup in the chest. Hiccup fell to the ground motionless and his murderer advanced towards his limp body. Toothless raced across the field and stood over Hiccup before his murderer could claim his body. The Alpha roared again and in his rage Toothless shot all six of his shots at the dragon. Oddly, the shots grew to three times their normal size in the air and created a massive explosion on impact. The Alpha seemed hurt by his attack and when the explosion cleared I could see that the heat of the augmented blast had charred several of it's scales and they were glowing like hot iron. All of the Berk riders were focused on Hiccup but I only wanted one thing, revenge.

With my eyes set on the Alpha's rider retreating towards his dragon I mounted Starfire. The Alpha stood up on it's hind legs and spread it's wings, towering above the town. I took off on Starfire and charged them. The last thing I saw was the dragon, not enshrouded by it's radiating light or it's cloak of shadows. Then all there was was white and my eye's felt like they were burning. I couldn't see and I could tell Starfire couldn't see. We lost altitude and we crashed into the ground. The next few seconds I remained angry and unafraid. I could hear shouts of the town and the wings of the Alpha. Toothless, whimpering, and roaring at his rider to try to wake him.

Astrid's voice as she screamed "Come on Hiccup! Wake up! You can't leave like this."

Then Stoick boomed "Get him inside and someone find Gothi and bring 'er to my 'ouse!". Then Starfire started whimpering.

"I'm over here girl. Just follow the sound of my voice" I stated weakly. I palmed around in a white empty void towards the whimpers. I touched a claw and was instantly pinned and licked.

"You okay?" I asked. Starfire shook her head as if she was trying to get something off of it. It occurred to me that she was blind too. I didn't know what to do now. I was scared. I always thought that I was pretty good at telling distances by the intensity of sound but now I felt like I was miles away from Berk. There were a cacophony of different voices, some panicked, some angry, some crying. I couldn't place myself and I felt like I was falling into the white void. Suddenly someone picked me up and slung me over their shoulder. I was carried off from the clearing where we crashed. Soon we stopped and I was let down and directed to sit in a seat.

"Who are you?" I asked reaching my hands out and panicking.

"It's alright lass it's Gobber" affirmed Gobber.

"What happened? Where is Hiccup?" I asked rapidly.

"Hiccup is in his house and Gothi is tending to him. I ... don't know how he is holding up. Gothi won't let anyone ... but Stoick and Toothless in. You and quite a few of the other villagers were blinded when that thing let out a flash of light. Your dragon is alright other than the fact that she was blinded too. After that, the Half son of a Troll that rides that thing and the beast flew away." Gobber answered.

I was silent. I didn't know what to say. I didn't even know what to do. There were a thousand things that I wanted to do like see how Hiccup was doing and chase and down that Alpha. However, I was powerless. I assumed that I was in the blacksmiths but I didn't know how many steps there were to the exit or which direction it was. I just sat there and closed my eyes. Minutes went by and nobody talked to me. I noticed that no one was talking at all. I was sure there were people outside the shop but not a soul spoke.

The low voice of Stoick broke the silence "Gothi examined Hiccup and she says he will pull through. There will be no visitors unless his strength recovers.". There was the sound of lots of people letting out a sigh of relief. I eavesdropped the best I could on Stoick with no other way of getting information.

"... No Astrid you can't go in yet. Hiccup needs room to breathe. That is why I am out 'ere." Stoick said.

I sat on what I assumed was the whetstone seat and thought about what I heard. Hiccup was alive. I found solace in that fact. I sat and the more I thought the more scared I got. What would I do now? I was blind, Starfire was blind, and there was a looming threat of an Alpha coming back to destroy Berk.

Gobber sensed my uneasiness and said "What's wrong lass?".

"You remember what we talked about when I was making Starfire's saddle? I guess you get to see me humbled now because I think losing my sight would be the last thing that I would want to lose." I said, my voice faltering and breaking up.

"It's going to be alright lass. Being a blacksmith's apprentice is probably the best job a blind girl could ask for." Gobber said.

"Still haven't given up on getting a new apprentice then?" I said as I laughed.

Just then I could hear Starfire come crashing into the shop.

"Hold still you blind beast. Your going to destroy my shop." Gobber yelled at her. She came right up to me and nuzzled my leg.

"Hey girl! How did you find me so quickly?" I asked.

Gobber replied "I think she can see again.".

"What!" I exclaimed in shock and joy.

"Hold on ... yes ... she is tracking my hand with her eye's." Gobber explained. Starfire made some confused noises and nudged me.

"Sorry girl but your going to have to do the seeing for the both of us." I stated. She then was able to lick my face as I had no way of defending against her. I then got up and used Starfire to guide me to the front step of the Haddock residence.

"Where have you been Freya?" asked Astrid. Starfire stopped and I realized I must have been next to the house. I didn't answer her question because I didn't know how.

Luckily Gobber had followed me and informed Stoick "Stoick. We lost two buildings in those fires and allot of villagers were blinded from that flash. We need leadership.".

I could here the gasps and whispers from the teens as they realized that I was one of those blinded.

"Freya ... how ... you ... okay" Stoick started but I stopped him and agreed with Gobber.

"I don't need pity Chief. What I really need is direction or a purpose." I said, spurring him into action.

## 24. Messenger

Stoick took a deep breath and glanced back at the house where his son was wounded.

"Okay ... Astrid, Snotlout, Fishlegs, and Ruffnut and Tuffnut, I want two dragons patrolling the island at all times. If you see anything suspicious like raiding parties, pirates, or dragons, you will not engage them but you head back here to warn us. Gobber get all the other blind villagers to the Great Hall and have everyone not manning a catapult tending to them. Freya ... I want you to come up with a strategy we can use against this thing. Any method for defense or attack will do." Stoick commanded.

"Chief we should be hunting those two down." Astrid complained.

"I can't leave Berk undefended to any raiding party or pirate that realizes that half our village is blind." Stoick justified.

"Hiccup, your son, is laying wounded in your house and you want to just let the person who put him there escape?" Astrid contested.

I jumped in to the argument "Astrid what are you going to do when you find it? We don't even know what happened when Toothless shot at it. Even that wasn't enough to break through it's armor. Also who is going to defend Berk if it finds a way around you and comes here? Who is going to defend Hiccup while he's wounded?" I reasoned. Astrid immediately withdrew from her argumentative attitude as she thought about Hiccup.

"We will take the first patrol Astrid." said Ruff signaling her brother to come with her. Then the white void flashed oddly and I instinctively pushed my hands out in front of me as a defense.

I hit something then heard the voice of Tuff "Hey! What gives.".

"Wait, do that again." I requested.

"Do what? Walking? Okay I'm good at walking." Tuff said.

"Ya walk in front of me." I said seconds later the void flashed again and I awkwardly shot out my hands and hit Tuffnut.

"Oh yeah. Nothing like a good shoving into the dirt!" Tuff exclaimed.

"I could see that!" I said excitedly as I moved forward to lend a hand to Tuffnut. Unfortunately my vision wasn't restored to the point where I could see details of where Tuff was laying on the ground so I tripped over his foot and landed on top of him.

"That hurt though." wheezed Tuff from underneath me.

"Alright, don't go running until you can walk." exclaimed Gobber helping me up off of Tuffnut. "Maybe it's best if you stay in my shop while you are getting your sight back." Gobber suggested and I nodded in agreement.

"Wait, Stoick do you have the arrow Hiccup was shot with. It may help understanding where this person is from." I asked in the direction I thought he was in.

Stoick's voice came from my left and said "Here be careful with it, Gothi said it had some kind of poison on it and there may be some left.". The shaft of the arrow was placed in my hand.

"Fishlegs if your not on patrol I could use your eyes analyzing this arrow." I stated grabbing a hold of Starfire's saddle.

"Well who is going to join us on the first patrol." Ruffnut asked. Snotlout looked like he was going to complain and volunteer Astrid for it but one look at her, and he volunteered himself and they took off. Starfire guided me back to the forge where I palmed around to find my seat. Gobber and Stoick had left to corral all the blinded villagers to the Great Hall and inform them, thanks to Tuffnut's willingness to be a human target, that the blindness would soon wear off.

"So ... describe the arrow Fishlegs." I commanded to the boy moving the arrow slightly towards him as I didn't know his exact position and I didn't want to skewer him with the arrow.

Seconds later I felt the arrow leave my hand and Fishlegs spoke up "Well there is nothing really usual about this arrow. The shaft has been painted black so that it's less likely to be seen at night. The feather is an eagle's. That rider obviously put some time into fletching this arrow and so I would assume that he would have specifically chosen this type of arrow to ... use."

"What do you mean this type? It's definitely high quality but that's not surprising. After all he rides an Alpha and has full plate armor. I wouldn't expect his quiver to be full of uncocked wooden arrows." I retorted.

"No but the head is what sets it apart. It has three snake fangs attached to a small bladder of some kind. When the arrow hit ... um ... it's target the shaft presses against the bladder and forces the liquid out through the fangs. It was made specifically for injecting a large amount of poison." Fishlegs added.

"What! hand it back to me." I said in disbelief. When Stoick said that there was some poison on it I thought he just meant a normal arrow was tipped in poison. However, as I ran my fingers down the shaft of the arrow I eventually got to the bladder and the three fangs Fishlegs was talking about.

"This doesn't make any sense. This feels well crafted and to get enough poison to fill this arrow would be much harder than just forging a metal arrow head. It looks like it was specially designed to not cause much physical harm to the target but why would someone care about that if they are just going to inject them with poison anyways?" I asked to get no response from Fishlegs. Me and Fishlegs spent a while pondering on this when I proposed "Maybe he wasn't trying to kill Hiccup."

Fishlegs pondered on that thought for a while before he said "That would explain why the rider wanted to take Hiccup's body after he shot him. Maybe what Hiccup got shot with was some kind of sleeping serum. It would make sense that would be his fall back 'Kidnap and interrogate the enemy' plan after we attacked them.". Suddenly Astrid's voice came out of the white void and I realized why Fishlegs had been choosey with his earlier words.

"Hold on that thing attacked us when it made all of our torches explode. It roared at us for no reason and caused that ... somehow." Astrid said.

I thought back to the roar and contemplated it before saying "I don't think it was roaring. If you remember back to Dragon Island we heard those sound when we were well away from it. The other dragons couldn't have agitated it because it's an Alpha. It would have just commanded them to leave it alone. I think that's not a roar but just a part of it's breathing.". At this point I could tell Gobber walked in because there was some noises as someone clambered though the front door of the shop.

"Bloody vikings turn into big ugly babies when they are temporarily blinded. Half of them needed to be carried to the Great Hall." Gobber



said in frustration. He then started working on a few weapons to calm himself down and we continued our conversation.

"I don't think a dragons breath could do that. Even if it was breathing explosive gas it should have had a completely different effect than what happened." Astrid commented.

As Gobber pumped the bellows of the forge Fishlegs spoke up "Wait Gobber keep doing that.". Gobber wasn't about to give in to the commands of Fishlegs but he was planning to continue on the bellows for some time so he continued anyways.

"Maybe it's doing the same thing to all the torches as Gobber's doing with the forge. Whatever part of pumping air into a fire that makes it hotter must be what the Alpha has in it's breath.".

Astrid contemplated that for a while and said "I guess ... that could explain it.".

"That also gives us one of it's weaknesses to exploit. If we shoot at it just after it breathes, our shots will be so much more effective." I added.

"How do we protect ourself from the blinding flash though?" Fishlegs asked.

"Easy just don't look at it." Astrid stated.

"That's going to do us no better than being blinded anyways. Before it flashed it wasn't shining at all. We could use that as our warning to look away." I informed. Several hours passed and my sight gradually began to return. I could now see outlines of things and I could move around by myself if I moved very slowly. Stoick had returned to his house to check on Hiccup and the three of us not on patrol and Gobber were now sitting on the steps leading to his house.

Stoick came out and Astrid asked "How is he?".

Stoick took a long breath and said "Better. His breathing is calm now and the wound is sealed. He is still asleep and Gothi's burning some herbs to wake him up.". He then looked down at Astrid and softly said "He will get through this. It's not best for anyone else to breathe in that smoke.". Astrid lowered her head and sat back down on the steps. The twins and Snotlout soon landed on their dragons.

"Chief we have a problem" Snotlout stated.

"There are around 30 raider ships coming towards Berk from the North." Ruffnut stated.

"Ya and their all armed up to the ... um ... eyebrows. I mean they ... uh ... got many arms, and not arms like the two arms we each have, well most of us, sorry Gobber, although they have plenty of those types of arms too..." Tuffnut stammered until his sister shoved him away.

Ruffnut concluded "They are headed this way!".

Stoick was quick to spring into action and he commanded "Get saddled

with those rock nets and thin them out before they get here."

"Uh there is a problem with that plan chief." Fishlegs said as he pointed to the sky. It was overcast with a layer of clouds and we couldn't aim without our shadows.

Stoick scowled at the clouds and proposed "Dam! Okay you will have to just do your best without ...". Stoick became silent as he heard noise from inside his house. He went back to the door to enter but Hiccup opened it in front of him.

"HICCUP!" Astrid exclaimed in joy as she got up and ran past Stoick to embrace him. With Astrid squeezing his chest and Toothless coming up behind him and nuzzling every part of Hiccup that Astrid wasn't blocking, Hiccup asked "Hey guys ... what happened ... while I was out?".

Stoick quickly updated him on the recent events, mainly my blinding and the raiders, before he condescended "Hiccup you should still be in bed".

"There is no way I'm headed back to bed after you just told be we could be attacked by raiders today. I need to get to Outcast Island." Hiccup informed us and Stoick put on a look that indicated that he thought his son was crazy.

"Hiccup your not alright ..." Stoick begun but Hiccup cut him off.

"I'm not delusional dad we need the get there fast for three reasons. One, to warn them about the Alpha. Two, if the Outcast's see that it's got a rider and we haven't explained that he is not one of ours, they are going to think Berk is attacking them and our alliance will be over. Three, we are going to need reinforcements if we are going to take on those 30 raiding ships." Hiccup explained.

"I can't leave Berk without dragon riders if that Alpha comes back." Stoick said.

"That's why I'm going to go alone. Toothless is a Nightfury so we should make it there and back faster if we are alone." Hiccup exclaimed and everyone else gave simultaneous noises of disapproval.

Astrid dictated "You are not going anywhere without me."

Hiccup started to refute "But Ast ..." before Astrid cut him off.

"HICCUP! You are lucky I'm agreeing to let you out of your house after you were shot in the chest. The one thing you are not doing is flying to Outcast Island alone. Nadder's are the second fastest next to Nightfury's so we will still be flying plenty fast enough." Astrid commanded.

"I'll go too" I stated getting onto the back of Starfire "Three dragons here to defend and three to leave."

"Freya you can't fly blind." Hiccup stated.

"No Starfire can't fly blind and she has already recovered. I can't believe I'm arguing with a boy who has been unconscious for hours over who is more fit to fly." I argued.

"Freya if we get into a confrontation you will need to be able to see." Hiccup reasoned.

"My vision has been coming back steadily for hours. By the time we get there it will be back completely. Not to mention I am the only one with experience in avoiding that Alpha." I lied getting very frustrated. I knew it would take several more hours to get my full sight back but how much of it did I really need to escort Hiccup?

"No Fre ..." Hiccup started before I cut him off.

"For the love of the Gods Hiccup, I am going with you wether you like it or not. I didn't want to play this card but seeing as I am the only one to ever receive a promotion and you haven't specified ranks I say that I outrank you. Now shut up and make a heading towards Outcast Island before I ground you for insubordinate behavior and fly there myself!" I yelled and everyone was silent.

Snotlout tried to whisper to Tuffnut but I heard him say "Wow. If she is going to be running the classes from now on, are you in for a coup?". I shot him a glare and I could hear him whimpering under my gaze.

"Alright ... lets go to Outcast Island." Astrid said very uneasily and Hiccup just nodded in shock. With that settled we took off and kept a fast pace towards Outcast Island.

**\*\*Author's Note:** Hi guys i've got bad news. No don't worry I'm NOT canceling the story but the reason it took me so long to update this chapter is because i've had a bad cold and couldn't write. I doubt you guys would find my feverish writing good anyways. Anyways, I finished up this chapter to tell you readers that I don't know how long I will be sick for, so expect a long wait for future chapters. However frustrating that is to hear imagine me having the next three chapters all planned out and not having the strength to write them. It's infuriating. **\*\***

**\*\*PS:** I have labeled all the previous chapters with single words but out of this feverish stupor I think I came up with the best chapter name ever for a few chapters down the road. Only one problem. It's two words. Do you guys care or would that trigger some OCD and tick you off?**\*\***

## 25. Skirmisher

The flight to Outcast island was the most surreal experience I had in my life. My eyesight was still bad enough so that everything seemed to be glowing. I could see well enough so that I could see Hiccup and Astrid flying on their dragons in front of me. However, they seemed to melt into their dragons and it was hard to see the details that distinguished them from Hiccup from Toothless or Astrid from Stormfly.

I made my way over to Hiccup's side and said softly enough so that

Astrid couldn't hear "So ... have you thought up what your going to promote Astrid too yet.". Hiccup looked at me with a dumb expression on his face and then shook his head.

"Well you better think of one quick. I don't want to have survived an Alpha attack only to have Astrid kill me in my sleep." I joked trying to defuse the tension. When he was silent I continued prodding him "I guess maybe I should do it now that I am the leader. I should probably give everyone a rank now so we don't have this kind of confusion. What do you think your new rank should be? How about chief complainer or reckless plan hatcher...". A smile formed on Hiccups face and he banked Toothless towards us playfully cutting us off.

I smiled back at him and said "Seriously, you need to promote someone else other than me. I don't want to know what it feels like to be on the wrong end of a coup.".

"Listen when we get there let me and Astrid do the talking. It's bad enough we have to try and convince Alvin to help us. We don't want him getting skittish because there is a new Nightfury rider." Hiccup said.

"I though you were allies with the Outcasts?" I asked.

"Very new and uneasy allies. I have personally fought him before our truce and he kind of holds a grudge." Hiccup explained.

"Then wouldn't it be better if I talked to him seeing as I never fought him." I reasoned.

"Ya ... that would be a reasonable plan but Alvin isn't really a fan of reason. He is more of a attack strangers on sight kind of Viking" Hiccup replied.

We flew together in silence for a while before I said "So I take it Astrid told you about what our plan is for attack if we run in to the Alpha.".

"Yes but there isn't going to be an attack. We are relaying a message to the Outcasts and then heading back to Berk." Hiccup affirmed in a calm voice.

"Really, you don't want revenge at all? I'm pretty sure your the only one here that thinks like that. Toothless shot himself out of fire after you fell and I think Astrid said something about hunting that thing down." I said.

Hiccup gave a sigh and said "I think we missed our chance there.".

"What do you mean?" I asked unsure of what he was referring too.

"Every time we have come across those two they have either scared us off or flew away. Everything about them, their size, their abilities, their sophistication all suggests that they are holding back. What happens if they don't leave? What happens when their not shooting venom arrows any more? If they choose to actually attack us I don't think ..." Hiccup stated but was interrupted by Astrid.

"Hiccup we are getting close. Now would be the time to practice your charm." Astrid yelled over, directing our attention to the rapidly approaching Outcast Island.

"Alright, remember we will do the talking." Hiccup said to me and I, grudgingly, nodded my head. The island was charred and black from what I suspected were dragon attacks in many areas all around the island. However, there were signs of budding life and small patches of grass and greenery were forming. Most of the structures were forts but several wooden shacks were built or in the processes of being build. Suddenly a boulder flew through the air and me an Starfire barely dodged it in time. I readied myself for more projectiles but none came. We landed in front of the catapult that took the shot and I saw a soldier being yelled at by a large man with a long black beard.

" 'icupp" the bearded man stated "Sorry 'bout that. The troops are very used to shooting dragons on sight and old 'abbits die 'ard i'm afraid. Who is this!".

Alvin pointed at me and Hiccup changed the subject by saying "Alvin we didn't come here so you could meet and greet our newest member. I've come to warn you that a dangerous dragon has come into these parts. It's massive and could crush a boat with two legs. It uses sunlight to disorient, blind, or even set fire to it's enemies. It can control wild dragons and it also seems to have the ability to make existing fires burn out of control.". "And" Hiccup hesitated before letting Alvin in on the next part "... it has a rider.".

"WHAT!?" Alvin bellowed in an accusatory tone "You and your group are the only ones who can ride them dragons. I can't believe that there is another rider unless you trained 'em!".

"I don't know where they came from or how he learned to ride an Alpha like this but I certainly didn't train him. I don't think your grasping just how massive this dragon is. There is no way we could keep a dragon that size hidden from anyone, especially you." Hiccup tried to explain.

"Are you telling me that just a few days ago the only person that could tame a dragon was you and now you are saying that someone else just happens to be able to do that too and we had no idea about them?" Alvin questioned.

"We knew you would be skeptical about this Alvin. That's one of the reasons we came here. It attacked Berk and temporarily blinded several of our villagers and burnt several buildings. We must have had a few spies because a large raiding party is sailing towards us. We have also come to ask you for your help. We need reinforcements against the raiders." Hiccup stated.

Alvin started chuckling for a long time before he said " 'ere I am with the name of Alvin the Treacherous and I'm not the one who is breaking our truce and trying to weasel out of the responsibility for breaking it. Your trying to lure us out to sea and divide our forces. You tell your Alpha rider to come here and start his attack 'cause now any rider flying over Outcast Island get's shot down!".

Astrid started defending Hiccup "Alvin listen to him. That rider shot

him and ...". She was interrupted by a screeching roar that I have heard all too much today. We looked up to see the clouds glowing a golden color in the opposite direction of where the sun should be.

"Alvin, please. Get all your men into the caves and extinguish any torches you have burning." Hiccup pleaded.

"You treacherous little ..." Alvin started and advanced towards Hiccup when the gale from the Alpha's downdraft swept over the island. The wind threw Alvin onto his back and pushed us down into our saddles. There was no taking off in this.

When it temporarily subsided between flaps Hiccup had Toothless walk over to Alvin and he said "Get everyone into the caves, Alvin!". Alvin looked like he was going to respond but another gust of wind drowned out any conversation. Hiccup then made a 'follow me' gesture and our dragons raced away from the town on the ground. When we got far enough away we took to the skies and got above the downdraft of the Alpha.

"Hiccup we need to get back to Berk" Astrid said while Hiccup was just hovering, looking at the Alpha attacking the Outcasts.

"We need to drive it off. It's our fault that they are not trying to negotiate anymore." Hiccup stated.

"Yep, I've decided, you are definitely the 'reckless plan hatcher'." I scolded him. Before any of us could do anything a Deadly Nadder swooped out of the sky and attacked Hiccup. All six of us were able to drive it off before it did any damage but as we looked at where it came from we saw a pack of controlled wild dragons flying into the area.

"Great ... alright Freya get its attention and me and Astrid will try to keep the pack off of you." Hiccup commanded. At this point, I was really wondering if I should actually take power from Hiccup so he wouldn't be risking our lives for someone who just dissolved their peace treaty. However I obeyed and flew towards the Alpha. Several dragons tried to intercept me however Astrid and Hiccup took care of most of them but a Gronkle grabbed me and Starfire and took us into a dive. I tried to arm myself with my sword but Starfire fought off the Gronkle before I could unsheathe it. Looking back at my target I saw the Alpha was firing the light from its crest and singeing a group of catapults. When it stopped I could see small flames licking the wood on the siege weapons. There was no doubt in my mind anymore that it was just breathing before when it set Berk's buildings on fire when it roared at the Outcasts. The sound seemed to drown everything out. After it was finished there was a slight ringing in my ears. Looking again at the catapults I saw there was nothing left as all the wood had burned up.

"Fire now. There has to be lots of that gas in the air." I said to Starfire. She fired twice at the Alpha and the shots looked normal for the first few feet they traveled. However, as the shots got closer to their target they swelled and when they hit the explosions were large enough to knock the Alpha off balance.

When it turned its attention to us I yelled "You remember us don't you?". As if it was answering its crest began to glow brighter as it

prepared to shoot it's beam at us. Starfire started climbing and instinctively positioned herself so that her body was between me and the Alpha. I knew what was happening and sunk lower into my saddle and buried my face into Starfire's neck and closed my eye's. The beam hit us but it was useless against the flame resistant hide of a dragon. I opened my eye's when the beam stopped and looked over Starfire's side to see the Alpha. It's rider was completely camouflaged within it's shining scales but I remembered that he sat just behind the head.

"Okay fire at the neck behind the head." I commanded wanting a little payback for all the damage caused to my back and my eyes. One fireball was sent out and headed towards the exact spot where the rider would be. However, the Alpha moved it's head so that the shot flew past it and exploded harmlessly in the air. That made it mad. We flew past it and Starfire was about to turn around to engage it again when I noticed that it wasn't shining anymore and I could see the rider on it's back.

"No turn away Starfire!" I yelled as I pulled as hard as I could on the saddle to turn her away from the Alpha. Everything went white again but this time my vision came back instantly. I turned to check on Astrid and Hiccup but their eye's were focused on the wild dragons so they weren't affected by the flash. The Alpha roared in frustration that we had not been blinded. Starfire seized the opportunity and fired twice. The projectiles once again swelled in size and made a large explosion on it's wings. After the smoke cleared I could see we had done the first damage ever done to this dragon. It had one decent sized hole in each wing and it started flapping harder to stay aloft. I flew over to Hiccup and helped him with a Monstrous Nightmare he was fighting.

"I definitely got it's attention now so what's the second part of this master plan of yours." I said with the damaged Alpha chasing us.

"Draw it up into the clouds so the Outcast's can get to their caves and then we run." Hiccup said and then banked off to help Astrid. I climbed up and led the Alpha through the clouds. It tried to shoot me with it's beam again but Starfire climbed above it and blocked it with her body. We got close to it at one point and it tried to grab us with one of its forelegs but we dodged around it. We were below it now and just on top of the clouds. It dived after us but, after letting it pick up some speed, we maneuvered behind it. It dispersed the clouds as it opened it's wing but the new holes in them had destroyed there effectiveness and the Alpha was barely slowing down. Hiccup and Astrid joined me above the clouds.

"Now we can go home." He said as we all shared a smile of satisfaction. Unfortunately, gliding just above the clouds is a very bad spot to stay if you are fighting controlled wild dragons. A Typhoomerang pierced through the clouds unseen and bit off Toothless's prosthetic fin. Unable to steady themselves they both plummeted through the clouds. Hiccup apparently got one of his reckless ideas just then because he and Toothless dived towards the Alpha. It was still trying to slow down when the extra weight of Hiccup and Toothless latched onto it's back.

"Come on we have to keep that thing distracted so that it won't shake Hiccup off." Astrid yelled in panic before diving after him. I caught

up to her in her dive and she added "Don't damage the wings anymore. It's going to need them to get Hiccup to the ground safely.". I nodded and Astrid and I began to bombard the Alpha's head, underbelly, and tail. We had to take extra care not to hit Hiccup or the wings. I was flying above the Alpha and Starfire just blocked another beam with her body when the Alpha stopped shining again. I directed Starfire to climb so she couldn't look at it and I searched for Astrid. She was in the middle of a dive towards the Alpha when she noticed the lack of shining. She managed to close her eye's in time but wasn't quick enough to cover Stormfly's eye's. It flashed again and Stormfly began bucking and flying erratically.

I could hear Astrid try to calm her "It's okay girl. It will ware off. Calm d-...". She was in the middle of trying to calm her when Astrid was bucked off of Stormfly. Astrid was plummeting to the ground and Stormfly wasn't able to see in order to catch her. Starfire was the only available dragon that could catch her but if I took pressure off of the Alpha Hiccup and Toothless could be knocked off and fall too. Time slowed as I contemplated what to do. Catch Astrid and let Hiccup and Toothless fall. No. Abandon Astrid and leave her to her fate. No. Then it clicked. I think even Hiccup might find this plan reckless.

We dived towards the Alpha and when we were close I stood up on the saddle and said "Starfire catch Astrid". I jumped off of Starfire and fell towards the Alpha and Starfire dived below it to catch Astrid. I positioned my body in the air so that the impact would not hurt so much. The wind howled in my ears before my body hit the Alpha's wings. I bounced once and then slid down it's left wing onto it's back. I was immensely grateful that it didn't have spines or I would have been impaled. It took several seconds to get adjusted to walking on it's back but when I did I made my way towards the head. Drawing my sword and adjusting my shield I faced towards the rider. He knew that I was on his dragon's back and had slid down from the head to meet me. It was incredibly hard to see him with my still damaged eye's as the light shining off of his armor camouflaged him against the back of the Alpha. I pointed my sword down at his dragons wing and he instantly responded by pulling out his bow and quickly shooting an arrow at me. I blocked it with my shield and sliced towards him. I cut clean through the bow but he used some of the wooden debris that was once his bow to hit me in the head. I stumbled backwards and he pulled out both of his swords and stood waiting for me to make the next move. I was fighting him so that Hiccup and Toothless could get to the ground safely so I was not going to attack unless necessary. I shot a quick glance back at Hiccup and Toothless to affirm that they were still holding on. The rider watched me as I did that and backed up and rubbed his foot on one side of the dragon's neck. When it started to bank to the right I charged. I went to the left side of the Alpha's back and it began to level out. As soon as my sword clashed with one of his he attempted to attack with the other. I luckily was able to block his attacks with my shield. Suddenly, through no attack of mine, the rider fell back onto the Alpha's wing. The air spilled from it's wing and the dragon banked once again. I wanted to seize the opportunity to end this fight but I heard Toothless growl as it became harder to hold onto the dragon. I fell back it the opposite wing and immediately regretted it. The dragon seemed capable of staying level with me in it's wing even when the rider got to his feet. I rolled further down the wing in order to get away from the rider making swipes at me with both his swords. I got to my feet farther down the Alpha's back and reengaged the rider.



Our weapons clashed for several minutes and I began to get tired. My opponent didn't show any signs of exhaustion and yet his swords had made several large cuts into the metal of my sword. Fear began gripping me as I began to realize that I couldn't win this fight. The first instincts rushed into my head. I didn't want to die by the sword, I could surrender or run. However, this also sparked a thought in my head that soothed my fear of death. All you have to do is keep him occupied until we touch the ground and then your death will have allowed Hiccup and Toothless to survive and escape. The rider took a hard swing at me and his sword cut most of the way through mine when I tried to block it. With his sword stuck in mine, when he tried to wrench it free my sword broke into nothing but a hilt. I wasted no time and threw the hilt at him, causing him to stumble backwards. With the last of my remaining energy I swung my shield around like a club and forced him back. I was successful at keeping him at bay until my body refused to continue this long after I was exhausted. Then the tables turned and I was backing up and blocking his swords with my shield. After noticing my exhaustion the rider kicked my shield. I landed on my back pinned in the crease between the Alpha's left wing and body. I watched the rider walk up to me in order to give the killing blow but then something dark curtained behind him. I just recognized it as a mountain when the Alpha landed hard onto Outcast Island.

I was thrown from the crease between the wing and the back and I slid down the wing. The Alpha didn't like me there so it retracted it's wing and I flew into the air and landed on the cold rocky ground. The wind was knocked out of me and I just laid there, face first, on the ground. I could hear some commotion as the Alpha moved around and I heard some footsteps coming towards me. Then someone was taking the bow off of my shoulders. I grabbed them and used them to pull myself to my knees. Why did I hope for anyone else when it would of course be the rider replacing his broken bow. Starfire landed with Astrid and he quickly retrieved a venom arrow and aimed at Astrid. I pulled down on the bow and made him miss. He knocked me down and put a foot on my chest, pinning me to the ground. The Alpha shot them with a short beam of light and Starfire was blinded. Astrid got off her and charged but the rider nocked another arrow and shot her. I saw Astrid fall to her knees and drop her axe as the venom coursed through her veins and knocked her out. I looked over for Hiccup but I saw that both he and Toothless were pinned under one of the Alpha's back legs. The rider's foot shifted to my throat and I let out a pained wheeze. Starfire heard this and began ferociously searching around to find me. The Alpha moved it's head down and bashed Starfire, sending her careening through the air and out of sight.

"NOOO!" I managed to scream with the heavy boot on my throat. I thrashed with all my energy to get out from under his boot but to no avail. I looked back up at him when I heard the bow tensing again. He pointed it down at me and a second later I felt the pain of the arrow striking my stomach. The force of the hit was nothing compared to the burning of the venom under my skin. I could feel it harass my veins as it spread through my body. As soon as I felt the pain in my heart the next heartbeat dimmed my mind. The boot was lifted from my throat and with another heartbeat the world faded into blackness.

**\*\*Author's Note:** Hey I'm back. Hurray for antibiotics. Thanks for the well wishes. As a way of saying thanks for being so patient here is an extra long chapter.\*\*

## 26. Interrogation

Heels. Why was I thinking about my heels? Oh, they were the only thing that I could think about. Every few seconds I could feel some sort of sensation on my heels. I couldn't will my eyes open or my limbs to move but I could feel my heels. I dedicated all of my brain power to the sensation on my heels. Where was I if I was feeling this on my feet? Am I on a beach and the waves are reaching my heels? No the movement is too random for waves. Then it hit me. I'm being dragged by someone. The rider? Most likely. To where? I needed to wake up. You can do this Freya. Just open your eyes. Come on, open your eyes. OPEN YOUR ... . My eyes opened a crack. It was dark out and I was in some forest. Ok what else. I'm being dragged by the rider. The clanking sound means he still has his armor on. He has his hands under my armpits and my hands are bound behind my back. What kind of binds? Cloth. Can I move the rest of my body? I quickly tensed the rest of my muscles to affirm that they are working. What was hitting my head? Something hard and not belonging to his armor. A hilt! It must be a dagger hilt. Ok patience, you are going to have to wait for the perfect time to do this. We started heading down a decline. I pushed with my feet and we both fell backwards. The hill wasn't large enough for us to tumble, in fact it wasn't a hill it was more of a pit. I fell on top of him and wormed my way up so that my hands were on the hilt. I grabbed the dagger and rolled over and started to cut the binds.

"Well this should be interesting." I heard the rider say from behind me. "It's going to take you ten seconds to cut through those binds so what were you ..." I heard him say and then the binds broke and he corrected "I was wrong, five seconds.". I stumbled to my feet, my muscles aching from a combination of exhaustion, bruising, and probably the venom.

"I'm curious, what's next in your plan?" questioned the rider who was now on his feet. I looked around my environment with wide eyes trying to find anything that could help me. "Was it to run? You could run and try to find your ally's here. However, how do you know if you are even on the same island as before?" he planned for me and cocked his head to one side. "Then again you would be abandoning your friends if you ran. I don't think you will do that seeing as you just jumped onto the back of a hostile dragon to save your friends earlier." he continued to mock. I couldn't reject his logic and fought the urge to run. I hated that in some way he was still controlling my actions after I had gotten free. I pointed the dagger at him and held my ground.

"Or you could fight me. I have to admit you had me on the run there when you were in your prime, with a sword and shield, after you had relinquished your fear of death. You should do much better now that you're exhausted, tired, partially drugged, and only armed with a dagger." The rider mocked and I just listened with a blank face, without the energy to show emotion. "If you actually managed to wound or kill me then you would have to take into account what my dragon would do to you once he realized that I had fallen. It wouldn't be pretty or quick I could tell you that right now." he said as he sat down on a log as if to mock me. I could attack him now. He is sitting down and has no weapons drawn. As I moved one aching leg his logic wormed its way into my head. I am in no condition to fight and he

has full plate armor against my dagger. I lowered my dagger and looked around again.

"Seeing as you won't run without your friends and can't fight the only logical move for you is to try to find them and escape together." the rider reasoned leaning back on his log. "The only problem is you don't know where they are. You could try calling out to them but they could still be unconscious and who is to say I didn't gag them. As it happens I know exactly where they are." the rider continued.

I raised the knife to threaten him and said in a raspy voice "Show me.".

At this point he drew one of his swords and said "I might if I had some kind of inclination to do such a thing. How about a deal, you give me that dagger back and I will show you where they are.".

"This dagger is my only leverage. There is no way I'm giving it to you." I said.

He stood up and drew his other sword and said "And yet it is just a dagger. Do you really feel like that dagger gives you enough leverage to make this much of a fuss over?". I looked over my opponent with both of his swords at the ready. With a sigh I grabbed the blade of the knife and through it at his feet, purposely aiming away from his foot.

"Which way?" I asked as he sheathed his swords and the dagger. He gave a slight pause and then pointed in a direction. I started moving in that direction very slowly as the day had taken it's toll on my muscles.

"Do you mind hurrying up? It is getting later by the second." the rider asked, walking behind me.

"Oh ya let me do all I can to accommodate you. You know, I was liking unconsciousness better than dealing with you." I replied.

"Do you want to get shot again?" the rider asked.

"Why not?" I semi-sarcastically replied.

"Because it is easier to manipulate you with words than it is to drag you through the forrest." he stated.

"Oh I see how it is? Your dragon dose all the heavy lifting and you are ... what ... just the herald. Big talk and no ..." I scolded but I was cut off.

"I think your forgetting who fell down because they were tired on ..." he gloated but I cut him off this time.

"... On top of your dragon where you used your bond with it to influence the battle ground to your liking. Yes I'm greatly impressed that you were able to beat my last ditch effort to help my friends with your, how many years of experience riding that dragon." I mocked.

"Nice try but remember who is in charge now. The reason you and your

friends are still alive is because you are going to give me information, not the other way around." he stated, refusing to answer my question of how long he had been riding his dragon.

"Oh I thought we were still alive because of your merciful qualities." I said sarcastically.

"Am I not merciful? I really only need one person to interrogate and yet all three of you are alive." He replied.

"No thanks too you. The only reason any of us were alive on the ground was because we were looking out for each other. There was no attack you gave that wasn't intended to kill us." I scolded thinking I had made my point.

"Mercy is a quality that has no merit during a battle. If you try to wound your enemy when he is trying to kill you, you will die. It only has it's advantages when the battle is won." He stated concretely sure of his answer. Without warning he grabbed my right shoulder as we walked into a clearing with one side open to a cliff.

"Our deal is complete here are your friends." He said using the hand not clasping my shoulder to point to a tree where a gagged Astrid, who was still unconscious, had her hands tied above her head, secured on a branch. Hiccup was laying on the ground, unconscious, near two tree stumps closer to the edge of the cliff and not gagged. His hands were bound behind his back like mine used to be. The rider took me to a third stump farther away from the edge of the cliff and pushed me down onto it.

As I glared at him he said "Don't look at me like that. You knew that I wasn't going to show you your friends and then let you go free.". He rebound my hands behind my back and secured them to a root that was partially out of the ground but had gone back into it. He looked over to Astrid and Hiccup seeing them still unconscious.

"So how about we get started. Let start with your name." the rider said crouching in front of me.

A large smile grew on my face as I answered "Wow is it unlucky for you that I am the first one to regain consciousness. The name and title I was given in Berk is Freya the Forgetful and let me tell you that name was earned.". "Now I want to watch your face as you ponder for a moment about how much vital information you are going to get from me with a name like that." I continued and my smile was growing with every word I spoke.

The rider looked unfazed by my attitude and said "Now I'm going to ask you a few questions. You are going to look me in the eyes when you answer each one. I now know what you look like when your telling the truth so if you are lying I will know.".

I nodded and he asked "How did the citizens of Berk start to ride dragons?".

"I don't know. When I had my first encounter with a dragon they had already been ridden for a long time.". I said truthfully. My smile grew larger when I saw the confused look on his face as he saw that I was truthful.

"What is Berks stance towards the empire?" the rider asked.

"There is an empire? How come nobody told me?" I replied to the best of my knowledge.

His look of bewilderment increased. I could almost see the thoughts racing behind his eyes. 'How can she not know about the empire' wherever this empire was. I could see he was thinking of a way to change his approach.

"What is your role in the town of Berk?" he asked.

"Oh well I just got a promotion. We are still working on the rank but I think it will be something like dragon researcher. I help out in the forge from time to time and ... as you already know I'm one of the riders who helps defend the town." I answered patiently waiting when this approach would come to a halt.

The rider pulled out the dagger and I thought he was going to threaten me but he asked "That's good, you work in the forge. Take a look at your friends dagger. How did Berk produce this quality of metal?" he asked.

"That's Astrid's dagger? Man is she going to be mad when she wakes up. Anyways, I have no idea how to make that metal and I haven't seen Berk's blacksmith produce any for as far back as I can remember." I said. For the first time since I was rescued off of that crate, I was thoroughly enjoying my amnesia.

I saw him get slightly frustrated and I said "Do you want to take a break or something? I mean the last thing you would want to do is misread me and accept a lie as truth.".

He stared into my eyes again with new determination in his eyes and asked "What were the events or circumstances which allowed Berk to become aligned with that island we were fighting above.".

"I don't know." I said plainly. He stared deeper into my eyes but didn't get frustrated when he saw that I was telling the truth.

"What are your parent's names?" he asked trying to get another 'truthful' answer to compare against.

"I don't know" I replied.

He paused and looked slightly frightened by my answer but then asked "Who are you?".

I smiled and said softly "If you find out could you let me know.".

I could see that he was disturbed by my answer and I set a new goal for myself right then. He needed to keep a cool temperament to check for lies so now I wanted to see if I could frustrate, annoy, or disturb him enough so that he lost his temperament.

"You look pale. Did I make you doubt your abilities to detect a lie?" I mocked. He got up from his crouch and started walking away from me. "Oh I forgot to ask you, how are your dragons wings?" I mocked again. I obviously struck a nerve because he immediately turned back around

and headed back to me.

"Now I don't know what barbarian trick you used just now but it has become apparent to me that you can say nothing that will benefit me." he said, anger bubbling in his voice. He grabbed another piece of cloth and put it in my mouth and tied it around my head.

"If you want to know how his wings are take a look for yourself." the rider yelled at me. I was confused for a second before a large figure appeared over the cliff. It switched from its camouflaging darkness against the night sky to shining light and it's body became instantly visible. I could see there were square dark patches where the holes should be in it's wings and I realized that the rider must have patched up the holes with cloth so that his dragon could still fly while it's wings healed. I couldn't help but show fear as the massive head hovered over the clearing. I felt fear and shame as it's eyes looked me over. I could see the pain and hurt I had caused it and now I was at it's mercy. I was cringing and retreating as far away from its angry and judgmental eyes when I heard a sound. The dragon heard it to as it stopped it's terrifying glare and looked towards it's rider. Hiccup had woken up.

**\*\*Authors Note:** Now there is some \*\*\*\*reference to an 'Empire' in this chapter. As I am well aware that the roman empire dose make appearance in the books I will never be referring to it as Rome. The reason being is that this is a fantasy world filled with dragons and because of that there would be no benefit to associating this 'Empire' with rome. The presence of dragons in the world would have affected everything from mythology to battle tactics of the roman empire. There are so many things that would have been changed that it is pointless to refer to anything as 'roman' as their culture would be completely different.\*\*

## 27. Arbiter

He coughed a few times and the rider picked him up and sat him on a stump near the cliff.

"Well I've got to say ... I'm not a fan of those venom arrows you use but I'm glad you didn't use normal arrows. Do you have any water?" Hiccup said as he was sat on the stump.

"Why should I give you water?" the rider asked with the anger I gave him still in his voice.

"Well we are alive because you either want us to do something or want us to talk. Either one isn't going to go down as smoothly as it could if I'm parched." Hiccup reasoned.

The rider nodded and then got up and retrieved a water-skin from the bace of his dragons neck. He held it to Hiccups lips and let him have some water to drink.

After he was done with the water Hiccup said "Thank you. I'm sorry we couldn't do this earlier today you know ... before the catapults and you blinding everyone and setting Berk on fire.".

The rider seethed through his teeth "Apology accepted.".

Hiccup looked confused for a second and started to look around. He saw that I was awake and watching their conversation.

"Ah, so that's why you are upset. You met Freya. I'm not surprised, she can get under my skin on a normal day and I didn't bash her dragon around with my boot on her throat." Hiccup commented.

I tried to respond to his comment but I forgot I was gagged and what came out was a muffled version of "Why haven't you ever told me I get under your skin?".

Hiccup then informed me "Don't worry I saw Starfire before I lost consciousness. She is alright.".

"Freya was fine until I started questioning her." the rider admitted.

Hiccup gave out a laugh and said "Why would you question her? She didn't tell you about her 'condition' did she?".

"No" the rider said plainly, all his previous anger gone.

"She only came to Berk a few weeks ago. She was lost at sea and when she woke up she couldn't remember anything about her life. She doesn't know anything about Berk apart from what has happened in the last few weeks and what she has picked up in stories." Hiccup stated freely.

I made a grunt of disapproval at how open Hiccup was being with this rider. What was he doing? That was the only thing that allowed me to make him angry before and now I am powerless.

There was the somewhat disturbing sound of the rider laughing now. "I thought I was going insane. I was convinced that no one could possibly be telling the truth when I asked 'Who are you?' and they answer 'I don't know'!" he chuckled. Hiccup smiled along with him. Had Hiccup gone insane?

When his laughter subsided Hiccup asked "So should we get started with ... why you brought us here?".

"Right, I'm going to ask you some questions and when you answer I want you to look me right in the eyes. If you are lying I will know so don't ..." the rider started the same speech he gave me before when Hiccup interrupted him.

"Wait we haven't met right?" Hiccup asked.

"No" the rider stated confused.

"So why don't we start with introductions. My name is Hiccup Horrendous Haddock III. That's The fearless Astrid Hofferson ... who is ... still unconscious in a tree ... great ... and you already met Freya the Forgetful." Hiccup said implying for the rider to give his name.

"This is an interrogation. Where you give me an answer and I listen not a ... a ..." the rider said and Hiccup finished his sentence.

"A peace talk or a treaty signing. I see no reason why it can't be.

I'd bet 'this' would even run smoother if we all thought of this as a peace talk." Hiccup said. Now I felt stupid. Hiccup was trying to make him an ally and all I had done was make him angry.

"I'm not ..." the rider started stunned by Hiccups brashness.

"If you just gave your name like it is customary to we could already be onto the next question. Now you don't have to start with your name, you could give us your dragons instead." encouraged Hiccup.

The rider sighed in annoyance and stared at Hiccup. A noise interrupted his stare as Astrid was regaining consciousness. She looked around and noticed the gag in her mouth. She began mumbling into the cloth loudly. It must have been annoying the rider because he walked over to her and took it out of her mouth.

"... TROLL. I'M GONNA RIP YOU AND YOUR HELL-SPAWNED DRAGON IN HALF. YOU ..." Astrid yelled but then the rider put the cloth up to her mouth again.

Hiccup started talking to calm her down "Astrid do you mind? We are in the middle of a negotiation here."

"This is not a negotiation." the rider countered and turned back to Astrid. She was glaring at him but was not screaming anymore. He pulled the cloth off of her mouth and asked "Can you be quite on your own or do I need to put the gag back in?". Her glare intensified but she did not speak. "Good" he said and he walked back over to Hiccup and sat on the stump opposite him. "Do you people not understand what it means to be captured?" the rider asked with frustration evident in his voice.

"Sure we do. It's just happened to us so many times we make the most of it." Hiccup answered. "Listen I have already told you how to smooth this along so proceed as you want." Hiccup said.

"You really want to know my name?" the rider asked defeatedly. Hiccup nodded excitedly. "Fine I am The Arbiter. Right hand of the Emperor and the ultimate authority in all conflicts or threats towards the empire. My dragon is Helios." the rider explained. Hiccup was silent for a moment taking in what he just heard.

"We ... are honored ... to meet a representative of the empire and ..." Hiccup started but was quickly cut off by Arbiter.

"I told you not to lie. I know that this part of the world doesn't favor the empire." Arbiter scolded.

"And I wanted your name. Correct me if I am wrong but Arbiter would be your title would it not." Hiccup said, worry evident in his voice.

"I am not some mercenary who does his job for money so I can live in comfort. I am a servant of the empire. I complete the task trusted to me and when it is done I find another. There is no other identity for me other than The Arbiter." Arbiter spoke with a chilling conviction.

It was silent in the clearing until Arbiter sat on his stump and



asked Hiccup "Now how did your kind start to ride dragons?".

The Arbiter roughly grabbed Hiccups chin and turned Hiccups head to face him before he answered "Well it is a long story the short version is after we killed the alpha dragon, what we called the Red Death, the dragons were released from it's control. They were raiding us to feed it so when they didn't need to raid us anymore we didn't have a conflict and we became allies."

"Hiccup what are you doing?" Astrid asked, bewildered by his openness.

Hiccup ignored her and asked "So I know you were holding back and using special arrows but why did you come into town like you did? I mean your dragon has a large wingspan and his breath makes fires grow larger but I don't see how you could overlook these things and think that we wouldn't take it as an attack when you hovered over town and caused several fires."

The Arbiter quickly and plainly responded "My job is to assess how much of a threat you pose to the empire. I needed to see your response to different situations and exactly how powerful your militant forces are. Now what is Berks stance towards the empire?"

Astrid cut into their conversation again "That is the dumbest question i've heard anyone ask. Even if we loved the empire before this, after this is over your going to be losing allot more ships.". The Arbiter ignored her but Hiccup turned to give a disappointed look at Astrid.

"Astrid it is not nice to give threats at a peace talk." Hiccup elaborated, hoping she would get his meaning. By the look on her face she didn't and then Hiccup turned back towards the Arbiter.

"We are not ... huge fans and to be honest we really don't take too kindly to your ships in our waters. However we are happy to keep our distance if only your ships would keep theirs." Hiccup answered.

"Now we have never seen a dragon without a mouth before. How dose he eat?" Hiccup asked.

"Strange question" the Arbiter commented but then he shrugged his shoulders and answered "Helios has never needed more than air, water, and sunlight. That's one of the reasons he was accepted by the empire, because he couldn't eat anyone.". I smiled, or what passes as a smile with a gag in your mouth, at his answer. He was openly sharing more information than was necessary with Hiccup. His plan was working.

"What do you mean accepted by the empire?" Hiccup asked.

"First you owe me an answer." the Arbiter said as he pulled out Astrid's dagger and asked "How were the smiths of Berk able to produce metal of this quality?"

Hiccup paused for a moment and then answered unconvincingly "Well we ... actually didn't make those ... um ... we kind of found them ... from pirates. We don't know were they got them from though."

"And that custom made metal shield I found on you with the Berk crest built in it was found and not smithed?" The Arbiter pointed out and Hiccup looked disappointed in himself before the Arbiter continued "I told you not to lie to me Hiccup.". Without another word the Arbiter snapped his fingers and pointed at Astrid.

The Arbiter looked at Astrid and said "You might want to close your eyes.". Helios's crest started glowing and Astrid did as she was bid. The beam enveloped Astrid and I saw the horror on Hiccups face. Astrid started making small screams of pain and I assumed her clothing was starting to smolder.

"Stop, please! I'm sorry I lied." Hiccup pleaded but when the Arbiter made no gesture to stop Hiccup continued "We call it Gronkle Iron.". The Arbiter made the signal to stop and I saw Astrid with her singed clothing still screaming in pain as small flames grew on her clothes. The Arbiter ripped the spout off of the water-skin that Hiccup had drunk from earlier and stood up.

"Go on." he said ignoring Astrid's cries of pain.

As Hiccup answered, Arbiter walked over to Astrid and poured the water on her, extinguishing her smoldering clothing and soothing her pain. "It was made from the lava of a Gronkle after having that Gronkle eat a fluke combination of ores. We created my shield and several other weapons for the town but we never figured out what the combination of ores were again." Hiccup explained desperately.

"Good" said the Arbiter walking back over to Hiccup "And to answer your question in turn, Dragons have long been culled or driven out of the empire. I wasn't born into the position of Arbiter or even as a citizen of the empire. We were inducted into the army after we were captured together about six years ago. Even though the Dragons were long gone from the empire people were still afraid of them and thats why Helios having no teeth or mouth helped us to be accepted.". Hiccup just stared at the Arbiter with a mix of anger, fear, and helplessness. I found it hard to believe how quickly the Arbiter's mood changed from a vengeful and malicious torturer to an almost friendly and forthright ally.

"So do you want to tell me which building is the armory on Berk?" the Arbiter asked as if nothing had happened. Hiccup was still in shock over what happened. "Hiccup look at me. I did that because you lied. If you don't lie again no more harm will come to you and your friends." the Arbiter stated. That was hard for me, and it look like Hiccup as well, to believe. We both thought he was making good progress. Now it seemed like whatever we did he could turn on us without a seconds notice. "Don't look so disappointed in yourself either, you changed my mind. I was thinking I would have to cull all the trained dragons and kill or capture all of Berk's trainers. Now that I've seen how ineffective your other forces are and that you want nothing more than to keep your distance from the empire I don't think I have to act. However, I can't take the chance that you will be distributing steel weapons to other tribes that might attack our forces. So I will ask you again, which building on Berk is the armory." the Arbiter asked again.

"I've seen just how quickly you can change your mind and resort to

violence." Hiccup stated, venom in his voice "I will never tell you how to make us defenseless, especially not with raiders coming our way.".

"You don't have a choice Hiccup." Arbiter said and then pointed to Astrid "All I need to do is hurt her and you will cave. Spare her the pain and yourself the guilt and just tell me.".

Astrid yelled from the tree "Hiccup if you tell him anything else because of me, if we get out of this alive, I'll kill you.".

"Stubborn this one. Tell you what, I will make this fun. We already know you will do anything for her but let's see if she will do the same." Arbiter said deviously and then gagged Hiccup with Astrid's previous gag. After securing it he walked behind Hiccup and lifted him to his feet.

"What are you doing? Stop! He cooperated with you." Astrid screamed from the tree.

"It's your turn now. You already know the question." Arbiter said from the edge of the cliff he had marched Hiccup to. Astrid was silent in shock and fear as she watched the Arbiter pull out her dagger. Suddenly he pushed Hiccup and grabbed his binds. Now Arbiter was the only thing that was stopping Hiccup from falling over the edge. He then moved the dagger to the binds and switched his hands so that Hiccup was only supported by the flat of Astrid's dagger.

"Please don't do this." Astrid pleaded.

"You should know how sharp your dagger is so you know just how much time you have to answer." Arbiter said flipping the dagger so that the edge of it rested on Hiccups binds.

Astrid was in shock for a few seconds but then answered "The armory is the large building on the road just below the town center.". I knew that was a lie as that was the fish storehouse but I didn't show it on my face incase Arbiter looked to me for confirmation.

"Astrid, why do I have the feeling that you are lying to me." Arbiter said when a sizable cut was made into Hiccups binds.

Astrid retorted, her voice cracking with emotion "I wasn't ... I didn't ... please just let him go.". The Arbiter was silent as he waited for the real answer from Astrid. While he waited another sizable cut was made into Hiccups binds and it wouldn't be long before they broke. "Ok the armory is on the same level as the town center. It is the large building closest to the Blacksmith. Now stop this, please!" Astrid informed almost in tears.

"You lied to me before. How can I trust that you are telling the truth now?" Arbiter said skeptically.

"PLEASE! Please. I ... I'm telling you the truth." Astrid begged. "Ask Freya, she has been with us long enough that she knows where the armory is. Ask Hiccup." Astrid pleaded, trying desperately to get the Arbiter to know she was telling the truth.

"I can't ask Hiccup anything anymore." Arbiter said chillingly. Without another word Hiccup's binds broke.

All I could hear was Astrid screaming Hiccup's name as he disappeared over the cliffs edge.

## 28. Aftermath

Astrid was frozen. She was unresponsive to everything. She didn't even react when Arbiter walked up next to her. He grabbed her chin in order to look into her eyes.

"Rage, shock, sadness ... No guilt. Huh ... I guess you were telling the truth." Arbiter observed about her. Astrid just stared at him as if she was unable to comprehend his existence. The Arbiter pulled out Astrid's dagger again and I tensed up. Was this it? Was he going to kill us all now that he had gotten his information?

Arbiter looked into Astrid's eyes before saying "I think I'm going to leave your dagger with Freya instead. I don't trust you to not try to stab me in the back while I'm walking away.". He then threw the dagger at me and it landed in the soil by my feet. I quickly grabbed it with my feet as I saw Arbiter walking to Helios. I moved my feet around the stump as far as I could and dropped the dagger. I then shifted the other way to grab the dagger with my hands. I quickly cut through my binds and stood up, cutting the gag out of my mouth. Arbiter was already mounted on Helios's neck and was several feet above the clearing. Now it was Astrid's dagger against a massive dragon and Arbiter's plate armor. I sighed and walked over to Astrid to free her from her binds. I cut the binds off of her hands and she fell to the ground. The gust of wind from Helios's wings knocked me down as well. As it's massive form climbed up over the cliff I could see a dark shape fall off of it. It hit the ground and made a muffled grunting sound. I started laughing as I realized what it was.

"Why are you laughing?" asked Astrid still kneeling on the ground. I didn't answer but instead turned her head to look at the dark figure. It seemed to grow taller and skinnier until the figure of a small, scrawny boy was defined in the blackness.

"HICCUP!" Astrid yelled as she got up from her position and bolted towards him. I could hear the muffled sound of Hiccup's voice trying to calm Astrid down before the forceful hug that Astrid gave him turned into a tackle. Astrid didn't seem to be phased by the fact that they were on the ground but Hiccup let out a muffled groan. Astrid heard this and got up and helped Hiccup to his feet.

As soon as she took the gag out of his mouth he started "You, milady, are such a hypocrite! You threatened me so that I wouldn't ...". Hiccup didn't have time to finish his statement before Astrid pulled him into a kiss.

"Ok ... well ... I'm going to go get some firewood to make a signal fire ... so ... you two ... can just relax ... I guess." I said awkwardly as the passion of their kiss only intensified. It didn't take long to find enough dead wood to start the makings of a fire. I entered back into the clearing to find Hiccup and Astrid sitting close together and holding hands on one of the stumps Arbiter had used to interrogate Hiccup.

"Thanks for the help you two." I said half sarcastically and half teasingly.

"Your welcome and thanks for getting Arbiter all wound up before he interrogated me. That really helped things, allot." Hiccup said as Astrid began to twirl the point of her dagger against a dry log.

"Oh I forgot about your plan to make peace with Arbiter. How did that go again? Oh thats right you got thrown off of a cliff and now he is headed back to Berk to destroy the armory." I replied getting angry with him.

"He had his dragon catch me and we are all still alive so ..." Hiccup retorted but was cut off by Astrid.

"Enough you two!" Astrid yelled "We just fought a massive dragon and an agent of the empire. I think regardless of what happened, us being alive and whole is extremely lucky and we should be grateful. So could you two please stop bickering.". Astrid had traces of the fury and shock left in her voice from when she thought Hiccup was dead. We both came to the conclusion that going against her wishes was not something that should be done right now, not if we didn't want to be knocked unconscious again. The fire started and Astrid reclaimed her spot next to Hiccup.

"Ok so what's the plan." Astrid asked breaking the silence.

"Well ... I only got so far as to build a signal fire and hope our dragons can track us." I said.

Hiccup was gazing up at the stars and said "I don't think he would have taken us that far from Outcast Island. That venom only lasted a few hours before so this island can't be more than two hours flight from it. I would think he took us east to that chain of small islands we mapped six months ago. Which means that to get back to Berk we would have to ...".

I interrupted Hiccup by saying "... follow the direction Arbiter left in.".

"Well ... ya ... but we couldn't be sure that he wasn't leading us in the wrong direction." Hiccup defended.

"Lead us in the wrong direction? When we have no way of following him and even if we did what would it matter? You heard him, it's why he didn't kill us, we aren't a threat to him so why would he care if we follow him or not?" I stated getting agitated again.

"Ok ..." Astrid mediated, calming things down once again "We know where we are so when our dragons find us do we head back to Outcast Island and get Toothless or head back to Berk.".

Hiccup silently thought about this for several seconds before he answered "Back to Berk. Toothless is smart enough to evade the Outcasts and Berk is going to need us to help drive Arbiter off or put out the fire's he will cause. But that is if our dragons find us soon. If we built a good raft we could get home by tomorrow at noon.".

"I don't think any of us are in any sort of condition to be building a raft tonight. Plus you can't have a signal fire on a raft and our dragons wouldn't think to look for us at Berk when we were carried off by an enemy of Berk." I pointed out.

"Do you have a plan that will get us home faster?" Astrid commented.

"There is no point getting home faster if we will be useless when we get there. We need dragons if you are hoping to help drive Arbiter off and that probably won't be enough. An the only thing the raft will accomplish is getting us there just in time for the raiders to arrive, which we won't be of any use repelling because we will have exhausted ourselves building and sailing the dam thing."

"Ok you made your point Freya. We will wait and see if our dragons find us." Hiccup said.

"Ok but then what?" I asked.

"We ... fly back to Berk." stated Hiccup unsure of why I was asking.

"And do what? Watch Arbiter destroy all the weapons we will need when the raiders arrive, try to stop him and have him kill us, or just wallow around because he has already destroyed all of them?" I stated in a rant now.

"What would you have us do?" Hiccup asked getting aggravated at me.

"To be honest I have no clue but I am sick of you making plan after plan against Arbiter and continually expecting it is going to work. We flew to dragon Island trying not to engage it and they chase us. You try to communicate with them and he shoots you in the chest and tries to abduct you. You try to get the Outcasts help and they break your alliance. You try to save the Outcasts and we get captured. I'm not good at making plans Hiccup you are, normally. However, you need to accept certain realities." I explained for him.

Hiccup calmed himself and coolly asked "Like what?".

"The weapons are as good as gone. Arbiter is stronger than all of us combined and we can't win if we fight him, especially not as tired as we are and not without Toothless. If we try to get in his way he will probably kill us and when the rest of the riders try to defend the town he will try to kill them too." I said.

Before Hiccup could reply we heard the roar of a Nightfury in the air. It could only belong to one dragon because Toothless couldn't fly without Hiccup. Within seconds Starfire swooped down and landed in the clearing. I smiled and walked up to her to greet her but she pounced on me. She sat back so that I was vertical but secured in her paws. I tried to squirm out of her grasp but she held me tight. Starfire started licking me as a way to check for wounds.

"Starfire ... Ugh ... I'm fine ... Eww ... YOU ARE ... EMBARRASSING ME ... quit it!" I stated in duress as I tried to escape her licks. I finally managed to get out of her grasp only to have her bite the scruff of my clothing and put me back in the same position. I twisted

around at her and glared. She got my meaning and she set me down on the ground. I looked at her with disapproval but my scowl melted into concern as soon as I remembered what Helios had done to her. I heard a squawk and Stormfly landed next to Astrid and began using her massive eyes to look Astrid over instead of licking her.

"Why couldn't you just do that." I scolded her and she snorted back at me. I noticed she wasn't showing me the left side of her body, which was the side that Helios hit. I tried to circle around her but she kept moving away from me and using her wing to block my vision. I finally grabbed her saddle and moved my way around her as she wouldn't move and drag me around. I lifted up her wing and saw that there was a patch of scales missing from her flank. I looked closer and moved my fingers along her now vulnerable ribs. There was nothing wrong with her other than the missing scales. Her wound was one of pride and vanity.

"They grow back you big cry-baby." I said shoving her head playfully. Starfire moaned and then covered up her flank and lay down, pouting.

"What do you think you are doing? We've got a massive dragon heading back to Berk. There is no resting now." I said getting up on her saddle. Starfire huffed in annoyance but she ultimately got to her feet and walked over to the cliffs edge.

"Hold up. I'm flying with you." Hiccup said, walking over to me.

"You worked out a plan now, Cliff-jumper." I said jokingly, my mood improved now that I was reunited with Starfire.

"No but when I do it will be easier to execute if I'm on the back of a dragon that I am familiar with ... and Cliff-jumper? Really?" Hiccup replied.

"Don't worry, if you don't come up with a different type of plan than you have all day you are sure to have a different near death experience and that can become your nickname." I replied, lifting him up onto the saddle. "And one other thing just because you ride Toothless doesn't mean you know the first thing about riding on Starfire. So ... I'm going to give you some advice you once gave me. You may want to hold on to me." I suggested and Starfire jumped off of the cliff. I could tell Hiccup immediately understood what I meant. Starfire leveled out and we soared forward at great speed.

"You call that a lift off?! That was the opposite, that was falling. I thought I trained you how to lift off properly?" scolded Hiccup from behind me.

"Yes I do call that a lift off but I also call it fun. You trained me how to take off the boring way. You won't get any of that boring stuff on Starfire." I stated with a smile. It felt so good to have the wind flowing against me again. "Oh and by the way, even though I was lying about how good my vision was back in Berk, now that I know what it is like after being shot with one of those arrows, I was definitely in better shape to fly than you." I commented.

"And now that I know that you lied in the presence of the chief to go

on this mission, I'm sure he will find some horrible punishment for you when he finds out." Hiccup retorted.

I mentally kicked myself at the fact that I let my tongue slip a little too much and then said "But he is not going to find out right Hiccup. Hiccup? Hiccup?". He didn't speak again for the rest of the flight. I spent the flight weighing the pros and cons of dying in battle or living and eventually receiving a punishment from Stoick the Vast.

**\*\*Authors note:** I should have explained this at the end of the last chapter but I forgot. In case any of you are not understanding Helios the alpha let me explain. Helios get's his food from the sun like a plant. He takes in large amounts of water and produces his food by **\*\*\*photosynthesis** and he expels the oxygen created in this process in his breath. That is why his breath augments existing flames and why Freya felt refreshed after it breathed on her. (I know there are more nutrients and chemicals needed for photosynthesis but then again this is a fantasy world with dragon. Not much needs to be scientifically accurate just scientifically plausible.). I couldn't have someone explain this in the story because it would be even less likely than this dragon even evolving in the first place if a Viking or citizen of the 'empire' knew about photosynthesis.\*\*

## 29. Sacrifice

I had trouble trying to stay awake. The Arbiter flew into Berk at the crack of dawn yesterday and I was beginning to see the eastern horizon lighting up and preparing for dawn. I couldn't get Hiccup to talk which made the flight really boring but it was probably for the best so he could formulate a plan. I could tell that Starfire was exhausted as well as I could feel her wing mussels straining more than usual. The relaxing cold flight wasn't providing me with any adrenaline to keep me awake.

I snapped to attention as soon as I saw Berk on the horizon. It was visible from allot farther away as it seemed to be glowing. I could feel Hiccup and Starfire tense as well as we came closer and the roars of dragons and screams of people became audible. A loud roar confirmed our fear that Arbiter was already at Berk.

"Now would be a good time to let us know what your plan is." Astrid yelled over to Hiccup.

"I'm sorry, I don't know how we can approach this differently. Support the others in the counter attack." Hiccup stated.

"You have got to be kidding me. All that time you had to think and you can't do any better than last time." I scolded. Before Hiccup could respond we were coming up on the village.

"Close your eyes!" Astrid screamed as Helios came into view, hovering out of catapult range of Berk. I put my hands over Starfire's eyes and after I saw the flash brighten my eyelids I looked at the massive dragon and it looked back at us. A swarm of wild dragons were protecting Arbiter and Helios and subverting Fishlegs, Snotlout, and the twins attempts of counter attack. A small group of the wild dragons broke away from the Arbiter and began to assault the town. Helios did not attack and simply followed Arbiters commands to manage



the assault on Berk and provide some support.

"Attack or defend, Hiccup?" I asked.

"Astrid, turn those dragons around, we are going for the Arbiter." Hiccup commanded. Astrid immediately followed Hiccup's commands and attacked the dragons that had broken away from Arbiter. I reluctantly spurred Starfire forward to attack Helios. She shot three plasma balls out at Helios as we approached. Two hit wild dragons and the third hit Helios's leg but, as it was not augmented by his breath, it harmlessly bathed his scales in purple fire. We kept approaching them and a wild Monstrous Nightmare and Zippleback intercepted us and latched onto Starfire with their claws. We started to fall as they would not let go. We fell over the town and eventually found our way over the cliffs next to the docks. Suddenly a large dark shape hit the Zippleback and the force of the hit traveled through it to us. My head knocked against the Zipplebacks scales and we spun around, shaking off the Monstrous Nightmare. Starfire regained control of her flight and hovered above the bay.

"Ah 'iccup. Your still alive." we heard a voice state in surprise beneath us.

"Alvin? What are you doing here?" Hiccup asked as he saw Alvin on a ship with ten more Outcast ships anchored in the bay.

"Wha' dose it look like? 'onoring our truce." Alvin said while launching rocks up at the controlled dragons.

"Thanks for saving us but that hurt." I stated angrily.

"But you ..." Hiccup stammered but Alvin explained when Hiccup seemed to be unable to ask properly.

"Yeah but when I saw her put two holes in that dragons wings I knew you wouldn't have the stomach to go that far to convince me that he wasn't one of your riders. Also, I'm not having this beast stuck on my Island. He would rip it apart out of boredom." Alvin explained and then gestured to Toothless who was freely on the ship with Alvin.

"Toothless!" Hiccup exclaimed excitedly as Starfire lowered herself next to the ship so Hiccup could jump off. Hiccup quickly mounted and took off and hovered next to me.

"So eh ... any plan on 'ow we should attack this beast?" Alvin asked.

"Nope." I answered for Hiccup "He has no plan that could be better than what you were doing so just carry on.".

"What do you want from me Freya? We either defend our town or it gets destroyed. What would you suggest? Should we just let him destroy us or better yet we could destroy the town ourself and save him the trouble. Our only option ... wait." Hiccup stated angrily and frantically until he stopped completely and put on his deep thinking look.

"Follow me and do as I do, Freya. I have a plan." Hiccup said as he and Toothless gained altitude.

"It's about time." I yelled as I followed him into the sky. We circled around the battle and started to pick up speed. Suddenly, Hiccup dived when we were over Berk. Toothless then shot several plasma blasts at one building in particular. I hesitated for a moment thinking that Hiccup had gone crazy but I inevitably had Starfire fire all of her remaining shots into the armory. The building collapsed in a surge of smoke and fire. The weapons were destroyed by our own doing.

The battle quieted and the roars of dragons ceased. Starfire and I came to a hover over the town and watched as the controlled dragons receded back into the darkness of night. Helios and Arbiter climbed higher into the clouds and disappeared as Helios stopped shining light. A dark shape darted through the night and followed them into the clouds. All the other teens must have saw Hiccup too as we all entered the clouds together. We emerged through the other side and joined Hiccup and Toothless who were hovering in front of Helios.

"If I would have known you would destroy your own weapons, honestly, I would have just asked and we could have avoided all this extra damage." Arbiter stated now standing on Helios's crest.

"Honestly, I don't think you would have. I offered you peace and you chose to destroy us anyway." Hiccup stated.

"Hiccup you know better than that, if I wanted Berk gone it would have been gone before you got back." Arbiter stated coyly.

"Instead you just decide to make us defenseless a day before raiders land on our shores. You could have had peace and now by tomorrow all that will be here is rubble." Hiccup scolded.

"It is not my place to find peace, that is a diplomats job." Arbiter replied coldly. Hiccup looked somber and it looked like the conversation was over so I spoke up.

"Not your place? I thought you referred to yourself as an 'ultimate authority' not a puppet. If you are an Arbiter then the only one who should be deciding your place is you." I scolded. The Arbiter just mounted his place behind Helios's crest again and they flew off into the night.

"Uh ... who is 'The Arbiter'? I'm really confused." Tuffnut stated from the back of his dragon.

Hiccup begun his descent and landed in front of his house. The rest of the riders and I followed him. Stoick also returned to the front of their house.

"Son." Stoick breathed in relief as he grabbed and hugged Hiccup. Hiccup hugged him back. It was odd seeing Hiccup this way after all that had happened and what we knew was coming for us. "When Alvin sailed here with Toothless I feared the worst." Stoick said, almost coming to tears.

"Dad I'm sorry. I couldn't see any other way to get them to leave other than to destroy the armory. I ..." Hiccup sputtered.

Stoick cut him off and said "I am proud of you Hiccup. A true leader needs to be able to make sacrifices. Those sacrifices can be hard to make but they need to be done. Now ... you have fought off one threat, let me plan for the next one. Go inside and get some sleep. All of you get some rest. We are going to need everyone for the battle to come."

I had no objections or comments for that. I was about to see my second sunrise today and I felt bruised and exhausted. I shuffled up the steps to the Great Hall and found my bed. The cries of all those that had been wounded or blinded in the Arbiter's assault didn't phase me. I closed my eyes and quickly claimed my much deserved sleep. One of Stoick's words echoed in my mind. Sacrifice.

### 30. Midnight Sun

**\*\*So. Three months. I'm sorry I don't have an original excuse for why this took so long. As with most people on this site, Life just got in the way and also I found it incredibly hard to write the first half of this chapter as it slows down the pace from the last few. So now for the people who where waiting for this story I want to give you an idea of how long you could be waiting for the end of the story. This chapter pretty much wraps up act one of three acts I am planning (at some point) to write. The other two acts might not be as long due to the fact that I had to establish four new characters in this one. (Possible spoiler alert) You may notice some thing new brought into this chapter. It is a minor plot point/visual effect from HTTYD2 but if you still haven't seen it here is your heads up. The reason I added this is because I would like to, one day, update this story for a post-HTTYD2 universe and the less I have to rewrite the better, also its pretty cool. Anyways I hope this mega 5000+ word chapter makes up in some way for the 3 month delay.\*\***

When I awoke my body ached. I discovered bruises and scabs all over my body. The Great Hall was nearly empty now as all of those who were blinded by Arbiters last assault would have regained their sight by now. I grabbed a plate and found some breakfast, or I guess lunch, as I had slept until midday. As soon as I took my first bite I realized just how hungry I was. I didn't have time to recall just how many meals I had missed the previous day as I scarfed down the contents of my plate and went back for seconds. I exited the Great Hall and I saw that Berk was mostly deserted. I walked over to Hiccups house and entered to try to find Starfire. Where was everyone? I decided not to go to Hiccups room to ask him where she was as he would either be gone or still sleeping and not know where she was either. I exited the house and focussed my dulled senses. There was a faint intermittent thudding sound coming from the beach so I decided to investigate.

I found the rest of the town. The villagers and dragons were all aiding in the efforts to prepare the beach for the raiders. Catapults were being placed into position and boulders were being cut for use as ammunition. Tree trunks with sharpened tips were being sunk into the sand and pointed out towards the sea. Starfire was not among the dragons helping the construction effort.

"It's not much but it 'ill help" Stoick said from behind me, surprising me.

"But it wont stop them." I said blankly.

The chief sighed and settled his posture next to me and said "No there ships outnumber ours and Alvin's combined and i've got a feeling that they are better equipped too."

"Alvin should have extra weapons ..." I started but then I was cut off by Stoick.

"Aye but the ones he is willing to share will only arm a few dozen of us" Stoick said with a defeated scowl.

"If I could find Starfire I could see if his perspective on sharing would change above the clouds." I offered.

There was a small chuckle in his throat but he still spoke with the same defeated tone "No I will talk to him again but either way a few dozen more armed vikings wont change the end result."

"Which will be?" I asked unnerved by this hulking warriors lack of optimism.

"We may win the fight but with the losses we will undoubtedly suffer it would be likely that the survivors would find no reason to stay. Win or lose this may be the end of Berk." The chief stated with hurt in his voice. I remained silent, unable to come up with any reasonable argument against him; The worst part was that there probably wasn't one. "One thing that Hiccup told me that I never understood was what you said after you woke up. 'I won't run away but I am not staying on this island'. That was some time ago and now you have your dragon so why haven't you left to find your tribe?" the chief asked.

"The only reason I found Starfire and am alive today was because of Berk. I ..." I stated but was cut off by the chief again.

"You ... have done more than enough. You have given us new strategies and protected us from countless threats and most of all you protected my son. Gobber even tells me that you 'elped out more in the forge than Hiccup. You have no debts to us." Stoick stated. I remained silent. "With the odds we are facing I would tell my own people to flee if it didn't mean some would be left to die. Whatever you decide make sure your acting for no one but your own 'eart." Stoick said and then left to oversee the rest of the preparations.

I watched the preparations as I contemplated my options. I didn't help because I knew that I would either need my strength for the battle or for my departure.

"Hey Freya" Hiccup said from behind me landing with Toothless and startling me.

"Oh ... Hi Hiccup ... hey." I said nervously. We shared and awkward moment of silence before I broke it. "Have ... you seen Starfire at all?" I asked.

"No. That was why I was out flying. I woke up and noticed that she wasn't in my house so I went out looking for both of you. I made a whole loop of the island before we spotted you here. Wherever she is she is not on the island." Hiccup stated with a concerned

tone.

"What!? Where would she go?" I asked desperately.

"I don't know. I'm sure she will be back though. I was going to try to get the group together so we can practice our defensive strategy. I could give you lift to the academy if you want." Hiccup said.

"No ... I'm not going to be able to practice any strategy without Starfire anyways ... if she comes to the academy let me know." I said. Hiccup nodded and then left without another word.

Where would she go? The impossible and improbable answers started flooding into my head. Did she try to attack the approaching armada by herself? No she was smart enough to not try that. Did Arbiter and Helios come back in the night and take control of her? No someone would have spotted them and raised the alarm. I made my way back to the great hall and sat on the approaching steps. Hours past as I sat and pondered where my dragon had gone.

Finally I heard the sound of wings as a dragon landed behind me. I turned around to see Starfire. I should have been mad at her for leaving the island and scaring me but my relief at the sight of her was overwhelming. I walked up to her and greeted her by scratching her chin and getting on my knees so that I was eye level with her.

"Hey girl. Where have you been? I kind of got lonely without you around." I said softly. Without warning she let something round, colorful, and covered in saliva out of her mouth.

"Ugh! What is that?" I said in disgust.

Starfire nudged it forward towards me. Since I was on Berk I had learned that this behavior was common with dragons and they expected people, other dragons, and mates to eat whatever came out of their mouth, as a kind of peace offering.

"Fruit of some kind. You know I would love to eat this ... but ... I have never seen it before and I don't know if it is edible." I embellished, trying anything that would allow me not to eat the saliva covered fruit and still not offend Starfire. Unfortunately, Starfire nodded her head and gulped saying that she had already tested the fruit.

"You know what, I'm not really hungry and if you say you have already tested it I believe you ... so I will just ... save it for later." I said worming my way out of a potentially disgusting situation.

"Why did you leave the island to bring me this?" I asked. I was answered by Starfire looking over to the beach where the battle preparations were being made. She also gave a low hum that an indicator that she was concerned.

"You were scouting for a good place to retreat to." I said in a low, unenthusiastic voice. Starfire looked back to me and nudged me softly with her snout and her concerned hum grew even louder.

"I know it looks bad. I have thought about it too. The thing is are you willing to leave Toothless behind because I don't think he will

be leaving without Hiccup and Hiccup is definitely staying to fight." I laid it out for her. Her concerned hum turned into a more mournful one and I could even hear small whimpers as she lay her head down next to me in both frustration and sadness. I petted her in an attempt to comfort her. After a while her expression hardened and her hum stopped. She got up and lowered her wing to allow me to climb on her back. Her decision was clear but I had yet to make mine. I Looked back over the town. I wished I could call this place home. Sometimes when I was in Hiccups home I fantasized that I was home, living with my brother and father. That would be so much simpler. To just know and accept your life. But I couldn't stay happy like that for long. I was like a puzzle piece that wasn't meant for this board. The more I examined the edges of my piece I saw how the once completed puzzle now looked unfinished and awkward with an unneeded piece. Finally I would think of my own family, my own puzzle. How incomplete it must look with a whole piece missing.

"Okay. Show me this island." I said as I mounted Starfire and we took off.

It was nighttime before we started flying over land again. The attack would be underway or just starting now. My guilt weighed heavily in my stomach. I had left without even a goodbye. Hiccup might still be expecting me to show up at the academy to go over defensive tactics. Hopefully Stoick could explain where I might have gone and eased everyones doubts. I looked down at the dark island below me. This was my home until I could find my real one. After seeing how barren and lifeless the other island was I knew Berk was the best place to be. I dived down to the cliffs and was immediately greeted by Hiccup.

"Freya! I thought ... my dad said that you might have..." he stammered.

"Yeah ... I thought about it ... well ... more than thought about it ... but the truth is that I haven't made any progress in finding where I belong. I meant what I said when I first got here ... I am not going to stay here forever. But ... I'm not going to leave until I'm sure there is a better place for me to go." I explained.

"I'm glad your here." Hiccup said with a warm smile.

"No just listen, before I risk my life you have got to make me a promise ... if we survive this ... you have to find some excuse to take me to all the tribes that you know of. Even the ones your not on good terms with." I said.

Hiccup looked skeptical at first but then said "I think we kept our dragons a secret from the other tribes for long enough."

"Great Freya's back. Now I don't have to hunt you down if anything bad happens because you weren't here." said Astrid, obviously feeling betrayed that I had left.

"Nice to see you too Astrid." I replied.

"Your hunting days are over, young lady. The commanding Guardian of Berk simply won't have time for any hunting." Hiccup said with a sly smile. A smile grew on Astrid's face despite her attempts to suppress it.

"Do you even have the authority to give me that rank?" Astrid asked.

"Of course ... and even if I don't, I don't think my dad will object" Hiccup said.

"Not bad" Astrid said to herself as she continued to try to suppress her smile. I followed Hiccup and the rest of the group to the cliffs near the docks. There were several dark shapes on the water sailing around from the far side of the island. They were already very close to the bay that had been prepared for their landing.

"So dose someone want to give me the gist of what strategy you were practicing today." I said warily with my eye on the dark shapes that continued to spawn from the dark outline of the island.

"Alvin's and our fleet will attack from the sea and contain them to the bay. My dad will lead the forces on the beach and they don't have many weapons so most of there contribution will be firing the catapults. Our job is to cripple any ships that get too close to shore. Do not sink them. Hopefully the crippled ships will make it hard for the rest to land and it will keep them in range of the catapults and not fighting on the beach." Hiccup explained.

"Now thats a plan." I complemented Hiccup and he smiled. We were all silent once again as we saw mortars being lit on the beach. Someone fired one far out into the ocean when the ships were still out of range. What I thought was a misfire turned out to be a signal. The combined Outcast an Berk fleet rounded the opposite end of the island. It only took a few minutes for all the ships to make a curved line extending out to sea and funneling the raider fleet. The ships were the first to engage each other as somewhere around ten of the much larger raider ships broke off and attacked the fleet. Boulders flew from one ship to another. Ships collided and the crunch of wood could be heard and immediately followed by war-cries mixed with the clang of swords and axes. The twins inched forward on their Zippleback but were halted by Hiccup.

"No we attack the ships that get close to the shore." He commanded and the twins waited. As we watched the ships come closer to the shore I couldn't help but notice the raider ships were still rounding the island. I don't know if it was just the darkness playing tricks on me but that definitely looked like more than thirty ships. The catapults on shore started firing. The whole first volley landed in the ocean and didn't hit any ships. The second volley was fired surprisingly quick after the first due to the amount of unarmed Vikings with nothing to do other than help fire the catapults. The fiery boulders arced over the ocean and two made contact with the first ship. The damage was significant but did nothing to slow the ship down.

"Get ready." Hiccup warned "Fly in a line with a few seconds delay between us. If the ship gets crippled before you fly by it don't waste your shots.". At that Hiccup and Toothless launched off the side of the cliff. After a few seconds Astrid and Stormfly did the same. I had Starfire step up to the cliff next. I counted the delay and then signaled for Starfire to fly. We picked up speed in a dive and as I leveled out I saw Toothless take the first shot at the foremost ship's mast. The wood splinted and creaked but did not

break. After Toothless flew over the ship several nets and arrows flew up from the ships deck. Unfortunately for them Toothless was far too fast to be hit by an arrow or net fired after him. Astrid hit the mast next and set it on fire. No nets or arrows accompanied her as they did not have time to reload. Starfire proceeded to the ship at a rapid pace.

"Right there. Hit the mast again." I directed to Starfire. After a second, Starfire shot and another purple explosion hit the mast. It was going to fall now. I could hear the wood groan as I flew over the ship. Arrows were loosed after us but we dodged them all. I was surprised that there was no net loosed after me. The mast started to lean and, after a loud crack, fell on the ship. It stopped dead in the water with no way to move. Snotlout and Hookfang, who I now saw were behind me in the formation, disengaged and started climbing. Without a sound a net was fired directly at them. It wrapped around Hookfang and forced his wings to close. Almost immediately after they were caught the Monstrous Nightmare set itself on fire and burned the ropes off. Hookfang caught the burning remnants of the net in his talons. They looped around and dropped the burning ropes on the now horizontal ships sail. The sail set on fire quickly and soon the whole deck was enveloped in flames. As the rest of the riders pulled up the catapult's from the beach fired again. The two ships that were following the lead one were hit. The force of the boulders hitting the ships forced them into each other and they were halted as they tried to push off of one another. Hiccup signaled for us to go back to the cliffs and we all landed.

"Jeez Snotlout what part of don't sink the ships didn't you understand." Astrid scolded.

"I didn't sink the ship!" Snotlout protested.

"How long do you think that ship is going to stay afloat with the entire deck on fire!" Astrid explained.

"Hey there was no way anyone could have dodged a net fired right at them. It's not my fault." Snotlout exclaimed.

"Astrid he is right. It's not his fault, it's mine. If we attack in one line they will be able to anticipate where the next dragon will come from. We were lucky that it was Snotlout that was hit, anyone else might not have been able to get free of the net." Hiccup explained. "Ok ... everyone attack at random, stay above the ships and out of sight and out of range and when a ship gets too close dive down and attack.".

With the new plan we took off and stayed high in the air. I could see the ship we attacked first was now a blazing light in the dark ocean below. The outcast and Berk fleets were engaging more and more ships as the raider ships continued coming around the bend of the island. However, they seemed to be holding their own very well as not a single ally ship had been sunk yet. The two raider ships that had crashed into each other were now pushing off of one another. One joined a group of two other ships that were headed to the beach. The other ship wasn't moving and it seemed like it was crippled. The damaged ship in the group of three sailed wide and split away from the other two ships.

"Attack the two ships but stay clear of the loner. Lets hope the



catapults can deal with that one." Hiccup ordered. Hiccup dived to attack one of the two ships and as soon as the purple ball of flame appeared on the ship the catapults on the beach stopped firing. Astrid dove and then the twins and finally Starfire and I made our attack. After my shot hit the mast there were no arrows or nets fired at me. It seemed that the new plan was working. After Fishlegs and Meatlug fired at the ship the mast toppled and fell on the other ship in the group. Astrid and Snotlout had chosen to fire on that ship so the mast was partially weakened. The weight of the other sail hitting it was enough to topple it too. I immediately turned my attention to the loner ship. It had made significant progress and was very close to the beach. The catapults on shore were firing at it now as we were nowhere in its vicinity. A volley of flaming boulders reached towards the ship. Two hits. The ship continued moving. Another volley. One hit. The ship limped onwards. It was only feet from the shore now. Another volley hit and I breathed a sigh of relief. The ship keeled and sunk before it could reach land. I was about to turn back to the cliffs to give some rest to Starfire but I glanced back over towards the raiders incoming fleet. five ships were approaching the burning ship in a tight formation. I looked to Hiccup. We would either attack them or let the catapults attack them but we couldn't do both. Hiccup signaled the dive and we all attacked.

I dived, hit the mast, and climbed to the clouds again. I looked at the damage we were causing and no masts had fallen. I dived again and again and the masts were standing strong. I leveled out and surveyed the ships yet again. Hiccup was giving Astrid cover fire as she attempted to grab something out of the ocean. As she pulled it out I realized that it was Fishlegs and Meatlug caught in a net. All three of them retreated to the cliffs. Snotlout and Hookfang fired once more at a mast and retreated with them as I assumed Hookfang was out of shots. The catapults started firing again and the twins stopped their attack and retreated. The catapults weren't doing anywhere near enough damage to the ships and, what damage they did cause was all in the wrong places. These ships would definitely make it to the beach.

"Think, come on think!" I prompted myself, desperately for any plan that could stop the ships. An idea popped into my head but then I immediately scolded myself for thinking of it. I needed to think of other plans that didn't involve me jumping off of Starfire with no plan to get back on. Not to mention I would be stranded in a dark ocean and I still hadn't gotten over that fear. I tried thinking of any other means to fight but nothing came to me and the ships got closer to the shore. I finally gave up and went with the plan. I had Starfire fly over the beach and I waited for the next volley of catapults. The volley was released and we went into a dive. I stood up in the saddle and moved my hand to the back of Starfire's neck. I pressed down and black plates spiked upwards all along her spine.

"Okay I want you to charge up your spikes and plasma blast outwards." I directed Starfire. My orders were met with a concerned roar from Starfire. "Don't worry about me just fire it right when your in the middle of the ships." I commanded. We leveled out close to the ground and the plates began to glow blue and purple. I stood up further in the saddle and said "Oh yeah one more thing. Please come and pick me up after.". At that I jumped off her back and prepared for the icy, dark ocean waters below. As I was falling I saw Starfire spinal plate glow brighter. The sound of a plasma shot being built up whistled in

the air. I hit the water feet first and my body clenched up in response to the icy fluid. When I finally stopped moving downwards into the icy waters I opened my eyes just in time to see a brilliant purple ball of light expanding above the water. It grew and grew and then, as suddenly as it was born it faded. I swam to the surface and caught my breath. All I could see in place of the ships was an inferno that was too bright to distinguish the ships caught in it.

"STARFIRE! STARFIRE!" I yelled between the waves. There was no sign of her after the explosion. I continued screaming her name from the icy waters. Finally I heard a Nightfury's roar and Starfire dived down and started hovering above me. Her saddle was all but obliterated with some straps of leather dangling off of her.

"Yes! That was amazing! We are doing that more often." I yelled as I motioned her to come lower so I could get back on. That would definitely block other ships from approaching as long as those ships kept burning. As she got lower, I caught something moving in the corner of my eye. Before I could turn my head to see what it was, Starfire and I were crushed together as a net wrapped around us. We sunk below the waters surface and Starfire started to squirm. Then pain. Blinding pain coming from my left shoulder-blade. I couldn't think as the icy salt water bit at my wound. Starfire had stopped struggling but the beat of her heart let me know she was still alive. My thoughts broke through the pain and I realized what must have happened. Starfire must have clawed me trying to struggle free from the net. She stopped moving once she realized this. Pain sprung from my shoulder laceration again as I felt the full weight of my body. We were pulled out of the water and being dragged up onto a ship. It didn't matter whether it was the ship that was crippled by catapults or simply that one of the five ships were not caught in the blast. We were in too close for a rescue. The net was finally lifted on deck and metal weapons glinted all around me. Fear was greater than pain at this moment. I was at peace with who I was fighting for and why, but that hardly gave me any comfort. I was afraid of death. More than others would be, I think. If I leave this world I would not only be losing my future but I would also never find my past.

The harsh voice of what I assumed would be the captain ordered "Keep them alive and under guard. The others won't attack us if we have one of their own. Keep us in the bay so we can cover the other ships.". It felt like an eternity passing caught in the net on the ship. I didn't bother trying to talk my way out of this as these men had come too far for a negotiation and I couldn't think straight with the pain pulsing from my left shoulder. I saw that a ship was passing this one and, as the captain predicted, it wasn't attacked by a dragon or catapult. I felt like I was going to pass out. My eyes started closing but then a glint from a metal weapon kept me awake. Why was that glint so bright? I opened my eyes fully and saw that the entire deck was brighter. It couldn't be morning yet. I turned onto my back and I saw that the clouds looked like they were turning into gold. Every second that passed the clouds glowed brighter, burning with intensity. The crew on my ship stopped working to survey this strange occurrence. For the first time since I heard it I was relieved when I heard that screeching roar again.

One of the golden clouds bursted and revealed Helios descending rapidly. The massive dragon outstretched its hind legs. Within seconds the ship that was passing us was crushed between the ocean

and the full weight of Helios. Helios's front paws landed, more gently, on my ship. The dragon paused and then flapped it's enormous wings which caused the ship to keel to one side. When we stopped rocking from side to side I realized we were in the perfect position to see Helios and the Arbiter fly into the inferno Starfire had created. Helios reached down with his hind legs again and picked up a burning ship. They then raised up higher in the air and accelerated forward. Suddenly the burning ship was dropped on top of another approaching ship. Helios inhaled and held his breath for some time before letting loose a torrent of breath. Ship by ship the flames jumped from one to another and each of the ships burned as if they were filled with oil.

I was incredibly grateful that he had spared my ship as the fiery display looked horrifying. This thought also confused me a little as I remember Arbiter saying, just a day ago, that mercy was a quality that was only to be used when a victory was assured. I began to panic as I realized that I would have a limited time to get off this ship before it became the last one standing and 'restraint' wouldn't be an option in his eyes anymore. I looked out to Helios again and saw that he was no longer glowing. I closed my eyes and tried to cover Starfire's but the net was too tight. The flash blinded Starfire and many of the onlookers onboard. Some of them fell off and some of them thrashed around wildly. In all the commotion several weapons were dropped on the deck. I reached out of the net and grabbed a dropped sword. I began cutting the net and I glanced over at Helios. There was nothing but a trail of burning driftwood reaching around the island and Helios was now picking off the ships that had engaged Alvin. I started cutting the ropes faster.

I had cut a hole big enough for me and Starfire to squeeze through without being seen. I started hearing loud thumps that resembled the beating of wings. The ship started to rock as the sail inexplicably got sudden bursts of wind.

"We have got to go now!" I yelled as I got on Starfire's back. She shook her head as she was still blinded and couldn't see where to fly too.

"Strait ahead is fine! Go!" I yelled. At that Starfire burst out from the net and clumsily took off the side of the ship.

"Left!" I yelled as I pulled on her head. Starfire turned left and we very narrowly missed a burning ship.

"Ok just strait now" I instructed as we were headed towards the beach. I didn't even care to look back as Arbiter and Helios crushed the last ship. Come to think of it I didn't even care to know why he had come back to fight for us in the first place. I was alive. Starfire was alive. Now I had hope for my future and finding my past.

"Ok we are over the beach now. You can land." I informed Starfire. She seemed to think she was higher than she was as she came in for a hard landing. I was thrown from her back as she tumbled in the sand. I landed on my back and the sand rubbed into my shoulder wound. The pain was excruciating and as my body clenched from the original pain the sand ground together inside the laceration. It was too much. I saw red in the corners of my vision and it grew inwards until my mind gave up and everything turned black.

## 31. Medicine

This felt familiar, this state of mind I was in. I had felt it before when I first came to Berk. Only now, the companion of THIRST was substituted with PAIN. It was anything but enjoyable. I remembered, after I was off the crate, I thought that I could open my eyes anytime I wanted to. Oh ... oh ... almost. Turns out you cant. I didn't really have a concept of time in this state so when I finally awoke it seemed like both seconds and an eternity later. I was face down on a bed with a bandage on my shoulder wound.

"Hey it's about time you woke up!" said Astrid from somewhere close to me. I shuffled around on my bed, being careful not to agitate my shoulder wound, and saw her sitting in a chair in what I now saw was Gothi's hut.

"What happened?" I said groggily.

"What do you mean? You were there. Oh no ... did you forget again?" Astrid said slightly coy but mostly with concern.

"What happened after we crashed? Where is Starfire? Why is the Arbiter back?" I asked trying to get up. Astrid got off the chair and grabbed my right arm making me unable to move.

"Freya you need to rest and drink. You lost allot of blood and if you move you will break the stitching." Astrid said. I stopped struggling and Astrid released my arm. She went over to a table and poured some liquid out into a bowl and handed it to me.

"What good is resting in here if Arbiter burns this hut down?" I protested.

"What good is one injured dragon rider against the Alpha that turned a fleet of forty ships into driftwood? Hiccup and Stoick are going to talk with him now and if I know Hiccup, he will fight as hard as he can for peace. Now drink." commanded Astrid.

"You have seen how Arbiter reacts to ..." I started my protest but I was cut off by Astrid.

"Drink!" she said almost yelling now. I rolled my eyes and realized that she wouldn't leave me until she did what I guess Gothi left her in charge of doing. If she left then I could get up and find Starfire so I picked up the boll and drank the water.

"That's some funny tasting wataaaaaah." I said with my tongue failing me on the last word. I immediately knew what was happening and I glared at Astrid.

She gave a small chuckle and said "Don't pretend you weren't going to try to get up again. This is for your own good. You should be fine to move when that medicine wares off". I didn't have time for a response before I passed out again.

This time I could guess how long I was unconscious. My body felt stiff and sore, but rested. The pain from my shoulder was replaced by a dull ache. I got up and carefully got dressed as I was alone. I

added a sling that was nearby to my apparel and cradled my left arm in it. I found some water and bread that was laid out for me and I hastily consumed it. I opened the door to Gothi's hut and was greeted by a blinding light. I panicked and immediately assumed it was Arbiter making an attack. As my eyes adjusted I saw that the light was nothing more than the rising sun. Wait, the sun is just rising now? It was still dark when Astrid made me drink that stuff and it must have been the early hours of the morning when I passed out in the first place.

"No. I couldn't have ..." I said to myself as a suspicion crept into my head. I decided to not worry about it and started to climb down the ladder which was much more difficult than it would normally be as I had only one uninjured arm. As I reached the bottom I heard the roar of a Nightfury above me. Starfire descended and landed just in front of me.

"Now you show up; After I had to climb down that ladder. Did you have a good time without a rider telling you what to do?" I mocked, secretly excited to see her. "It's okay girl. It's nice to see you care, even if it is not enough to wait for me outside." I said rubbing her head. Without warning she stood on her hind legs and embraced me inside her wings and forelegs, crooning softly.

"Okay ... that's painful caring. Very painful caring" I wheezed, crushed in her clutches. She swiftly released me and bowed her head. I waited for the pain to subside and then got onto Starfire's back. She took off and I held on tightly with one hand. Something didn't feel right. Wait, my saddle was destroyed in the battle so what was I sitting on. I looked over to the bay and was astounded to see that there was no rubble from the battle and all of the preparations on the beach were dismantled. On top of that, there were no Outcast ships mixed in with Berks fleet. I had Starfire dive down to Gobbers blacksmith where I saw a crowd of people gathering.

"Freya!" Hiccup called out from inside the blacksmith. He abandoned a weapon he was working on and ran over to me. "What are you doing flying? You need to take it easy and rest that arm." he added.

"Something tells me I have had plenty of rest, Hiccup. Where is Arbiter? Why isn't Alvin still here incase he attacks." I asked and as I said it I noticed small indications of guilt on his face.

"Um ... well ... they both left." Hiccup replied.

"Left? Already? Why and where did they go?" I asked.

"Well they weren't going to stick around for very long. Alvin went back to Outcast Island and Arbiter went back to gods knows where in the empire." Hiccup explained.

"Very long? How long are we talking about Hiccup." I questioned, sparks of anger in my voice.

"Oh ... um ... before I tell you I want to let you know that Astrid made a slight mistake in measurement when she gave you that medicine and she told me that she is very sorr ..." Hiccup stammered.

"How long, Hiccup!" I demanded.

"Three days." He answered sheepishly. "Look at it this way you got plenty of rest and you slept through the worst of the pain." Hiccup said, trying to justify this.

"SLEPT?! Three days is a short coma, not a rest. What if Arbiter set the hut on fire while I was laying there? Sure let's drug someone and leave them incapacitated while Berk is host to a hostile Alpha and his ruthless, methodical, and extremely violent rider!" I started yelling before I realized, mid-sentence, that this was not his fault.

"He is actually not all that violent. Not all the time. He is actually ... well I wouldn't say reasonable but ... understanding ... kind of." Hiccup said. This was absolutely breathtaking to me. Was Hiccup defending the person who shot him in the chest a few days ago? Hiccup picked up on my quizzical look and shouted over to Gobber and Fishlegs, who I now saw was at the forge with Meatlug, "Hey I'm going to help get Freya caught up. Can you guys manage alone for a few minutes?".

"When your done ask her if she can help. Berks armory isn't going to replenish itself." Gobber yelled back. Hiccup led me up to his house and sat me down on the bench while he started to pace in front of me.

"So ... I guess I should start after you crashed on the beach, huh?" Hiccup confirmed before moving on with the story.

## 32. Lightning and Death

**\*\*AN:** I'm sorry to all those of you who where following this story for how long I have been neglecting to write chapters. I assure you there is a long story to be told after this but I have lost my taste for writing "Original" plot stores. Again to all of you people who have already read this side chapter I am sorry for not supplying you with something new but to those who have not, enjoy.\*\*

**\*\*This is a side story featuring Freya and assumes that she is well into her position of Dragon Researcher.\*\***

"Freya, my answer is no, it will always be no." Hiccup stated storming out of his house.

"Hiccup since you gave me this job I have not messed up once. I have done more to prove that I am an effective dragon trainer than even you have. How many extra pages were added to the Book of Dragons because of my work?" I pointed out desperately trying to change his mind.

"Freya you have no idea what we went through just to contain it." Hiccup stated still trying to walk away from me and stop having this conversation.

"Hiccup, I told you a long time ago what would happen if you purposely held me back or withheld any information from me." I threatened. Hiccup stopped in his tracks and stood with his back facing me.

He sighed and softly said "As much as this pains me to say it, I would rather you leave than wake up that Skrill again.". I was speechless. Hiccup then resumed his retreat but I didn't follow him. I never thought that this line would ever be crossed. Hiccup was willing to sacrifice all of what we had built. This place was my life. The only life I could remember, the only one that mattered and now it felt like I was unwanted here. I had heard the story of the Skrill and how it was resolved. Trapped in ice. When I heard about this I couldn't bare to imagine what that might be like. Was it awake? Every time I thought about this I couldn't help comparing it to being lost at sea. In both you were helpless to do anything. Then there was the cruel torture of temptation. Seeing the light piercing through the clear ice would be as horrible as being enveloped by water and unable to quench your thirst. How could Hiccup, of all people, condemn a dragon to such a horrible fate. In addition how could he be so sure of his condemnation to be willing to sacrifice our friendship for it.

As was in style for them, the twins spontaneously and ridiculously came out of nowhere. "Hey did Hiccup say we could thaw that Skrill." asked Ruffnut.

"When your not training it or riding it could we ... you know ... borrow it ... for a completely non-destructive purpose?" Tuff asked.

"If it see's us again, after we froze it in, I think it's gonna eat you ... and then I'll get to ride it all by myself" stated Ruff. The shock of losing Hiccup as a friend was slowly curdling into rage. I set off towards the Great Hall and I barely noticed when I shoved Tuffnut, who was in my way, into the well.

"That was great! I can't believe I have never been down here before. It's kind of ... cosy." a voice echoed from the bottom of the well.

"Tuffnut climb out of there. No one want's to drink 'Tuffnut stew' instead of water." Ruffnut yelled down at her brother. I barely registered my march to the Great Hall. Everything was dulled now as my rage boiled over. How did that arrogant little runt think that he has the power to rule over me or that Skrill? I should find him and beat the location from him. If he is willing to discard me as a friend and treat me like an outsider, fine. An outsider does not bend to anyones will. The more I ranted in my head the worse I felt. My feelings of rage had transformed once again into poisonous sorrow. It burned my insides as the sorrow raced through me. It was already late, I guess that was why I came here. I crawled into bed with my emotions having weakened me and instantly fell asleep.

I don't think I had ever had a dream as vivid as this. I actually can't remember if I had dreams at all since the crate. I was back there, on the crate in the sea. Thirst once again tortured my mind and my body. I stared at the girl under the water. She looked like me, no sea salt on her skin, tidy hair, and beautiful healthy red lips. I looked up and saw two Nightfury's hovering in front of me. They each had riders. On the left Nightfury, Hiccup stared down at me with judgmental eyes. On the back of the right Nightfury was ... Freya?

"Aren't you going to help her?" Freya asked Hiccup.

Hiccup shook his head and said "If I help her she will only cause problems for Berk.".

"But you can't just leave her, she will die." Freya retorted to Hiccup.

"No she won't" Hiccup replied. At that they turned around and started to fly away. As they left the ocean began to freeze in a circle around me. The ice closed in and squeezed me and shattered the crate. I pushed on the ice hoping to free myself from it's clutches only to find that it grew over my left hand, pinning it. The ice grew both upwards and downwards. It reached my chest and then my knees, then my neck and then my feet. It accelerated as it passed over my head and pinned my arm from flailing above my head. I did not die. As promised by Hiccup I was alive but the ice did not stop. It continued to grow above me and the light began to fade.

ALONE. COLD. AFRAID.

Then darkness.

I inhaled sharply as I awoke from my dream. I was breathing as if I had just sparred with Astrid for three hours. It was still the middle of the night but I felt I could not sleep anymore. As I sat on the edge of my bed and regulated my breathing I noticed Starfire had left the Haddock house and had come to join me with a concerned look on her face. Had I really been that distressed during my dream that she sensed my stress all the way from Hiccups house? I wasn't angry with Hiccup anymore I just needed to show him that he was wrong. I got up and exited the Great Hall with Starfire. I walked down to the town and stood in front of their door. I opened it and saw the twins sleeping like bats off of the rafters. They opened their eyes and looked at me before I grabbed them and tore them from the rafters.

Tuff was surprisingly little trouble to bind, gag, and get outside. Maybe I only thought he was because he was easy compared to how hard it was to tie up Ruff and leave her there. I would definitely have some bruises showing up by tomorrow thanks to her. I got Tuff up on Starfire's saddle and mounted her myself. I earned a quizzical look from Starfire before we took off. While we were in the air I undid Tuff's gag.

"Tuff, you can make this simple. Tell me which way the glazier is that has the Skrill frozen in it or ... well you know how this goes." I demanded.

"I will never tell you anything no matter what you ... wait ... you want to unfreeze the super-destructive Skrill? Why didn't you just ask? East." Tuff replied.

"You would just tell me, just like that. Even though you know that Hiccup doesn't want the Skrill unfrozen and it could destroy Berk? Where is your loyalty Tuffnut?" I asked.

"Uh ... I'm confused. Shouldn't your loyalty be worse if you are the one who is trying to unfreeze the Skrill?" Tuff replied.

"I'm not a Berkian and Hiccup seemed to feel just fine with that



yesterday. Besides in a way I am helping Hiccup. He is wrong about the Skrill and since he can't accept that, I'm going to show him." I replied. We continued to fly east and I made a few course adjustments as Tuff instructed. As dawn broke, a massive glazier came into view. How was I going to find the Skrill in something that massive?

As if answering my thoughts Tuffnut said "See that little crack in the ice? That used to be a big ravine until we collapsed it and trapped the Skrill.". Starfire landed and I dismounted while Tuff fell off.

"You may want to stay back once I free it." I suggested to Tuff.

"Ya right. I didn't come all this way to not watch the Skrill get angry and electrify everything in its path." He replied.

"You came all this way because I forced you to and when the Skrill gets out, there is a chance that it will recognize that you are the one who trapped it in there. So the 'electrifying' would be focused on you if it sees you." I reasoned.

"Oh ... ok I'll just watch from over there. Good luck not getting fried." Tuff replied as he ran off over a snow embankment. I took my horn off of my belt and positioned my fingers in the appropriate slots. I had made it a month ago as I realized that not everyone in our group of dragon riders could perform dragon calls as well as others. I was intending to give it to Snotlout or the twins but I realized that the horn could also amplify how loud the call was. I kept it as it seemed just as impossible to teach them how to use the horn as it was to have them make the sounds themselves. I blew into it and a few minutes later a pack of Gronkles landed in front of me. Gronkles were the first dragon that I had mastered, aside from Starfire but it would be a long stretch to say that one could 'Master' a Nightfury, so it took me little time to tame them and set them to work turning the ice into steam with lava. It took an hour but I could now see the Skrill under the ice. It's eye was open but motionless. The Gronkles had melted the ice down farther in front of the Skrill so I could prepare. I took my sword and any other bits of metal I had on me and stuck them into the ice between me and the Skrill. With a final command from me the Gronkles melted the ice surrounding the Skrill. The steam billowed around the Skrill obscuring my view. Without warning lightning bolts shot out in every direction and the ones that could have hit me were absorbed by my sword that was stuck in the ice. This scared the Gronkles away however the lightning was caught by my sword. I bowed, as this would be most effective with a highly aggressive and powerful dragon, and then slowly walked towards the barrier of metal. The Skrill looked extremely agitated, as it should after being frozen in ice for several years and who knows how long before Hiccup found it. However, it started to move towards the barrier too. I stuck my hand out and it retreated slightly but it calmed down and resumed moving towards me. We were almost together when something caught its attention. It looked up out of the hole we were in and saw Starfire, standing there passively watching. It let out a loud roar and flapped it's wings and exited the hole. The Skrill and Starfire had started fighting as I heard the shots of both a Nightfury and a Skrill being fired. I then heard the roar of a different Nightfury and the Skrill left. Starfire jumped into the hole and I got onto her back and we exited the hole.

"I told you the Skrill was too dangerous to be unfrozen. Why can't you ever just listen to me?" Hiccup scolded, landing Toothless on the glazier.

"And I told you what would happen if you tried to stop me from unfreezing that Skrill. Tuff is over there behind the snowbank. Take him and fly back to Berk, this isn't your concern." I yelled back at him.

"Freya, I am telling you that that Skrill will cause destruction wherever it goes and we need to contain it ..." Hiccup explained.

"I am not yours to command and that Skrill is not yours to control! You are a leader Hiccup, not a god. You don't have the right or the power to dictate my fate or that Skrill's. Something else is going on here and I am not about to attack a frightened dragon that had been cruelly sealed in ice for years without knowing what that something is." I yelled at him.

"Freya it attacked you as soon as it was unfrozen." Hiccup replied.

"It was calm with me, it attacked Starfire for no reason and I intend to find out why. This is the last time I will ask you Hiccup, take Tuff and go back to Berk." I threatened.

"If you're not going to help me contain it then I will do it myself." Hiccup said as Toothless took off in pursuit of the fleeing Skrill.

"HICCUP!" I screamed at him as I got Starfire to follow. The Skrill was flying away at great speed and it didn't look like it was trying to run but was headed somewhere. Hiccup and Toothless were gaining on it as a Skrill's speed was slightly slower than a Nightfury. Unfortunately for Hiccup, Toothless's speed with all the weight of his prosthetic and related mechanisms was no match for Starfire's.

"Fire past them!" I commanded and Starfire shot out a plasma bolt that exploded in front of Hiccup and Toothless. Hiccup barely had time to look back before Starfire was nudging Toothless's tail to knock him off balance. They evasively flew through the clouds trying to lose us.

"No, follow the Skrill. Stay just below the clouds." I commanded to Starfire. There were a few moments of silence before the clouds broke in front of me and I could see Hiccup and Toothless, once again, pursuing the Skrill.

"Cloud break maneuver." I said to Starfire. She then angled up through the clouds and then dived into the area where Hiccup was most likely at. She roared at the last second to find their exact position and we broke through the clouds. Toothless had enough time to figure out where Starfire's roar had come from and he had flipped so that both Nightfury's were clawing at each other while falling through the air. However, with Toothless upside down Starfire was in control of the dive.

"Freya I'm not leaving that Skrill out in the world and waiting for it to attack Berk!" Hiccup screamed at me from the other side of

Toothless and Starfire.

"If you haven't noticed it's not headed for Berk." I yelled to him.

"I'm still not going to be trusting you to deal with it alone if it does." Hiccup replied.

"Fine, come with me. We can figure out a way to train it together but if you decide to come with me we do things my way, I lead you follow." I offered as the angle of our dive increased. Hiccup was silent and I caught a glimpse of him looking at the rapidly approaching ocean.

"What's my other choice?" Hiccup asked warily.

"Either your with me or your swimming back to Berk so if your in I need to hear it. Better make it fast too." I finalized.

"Fine!" Hiccup affirmed with a shout. I pulled up on Starfire's saddle and she released Toothless from the dive. Toothless quickly flipped upright and pulled up stopping him and Hiccup from falling into the ocean. Toothless was motioning towards his counter attack on us before Hiccup pulled him away and calmed him down. We moved over next to them and I eyed the two of them suspiciously. Hiccup was having a private conversation with Toothless which I didn't like. I assumed that they were discussing when and where to betray us.

Hiccup then stopped talking to Toothless and turned to me and said "Well are you going to lead like you said you would?".

"In a way, you and Toothless will always fly slightly in front and to the right of us. If you make any move that is not approved by me I will destroy Toothless's prosthetic and you will be swimming. We are only going to be following the Skrill until it gets where it is going. There is no need to be traveling at top speed so if Toothless accelerates too fast the prosthetic is gone." I dictated.

Hiccup did as I commanded and then asked "Why the precautions? I said I would do things your way and, out of the two of us, I am the most trustworthy.".

"So do I. I told you I would leave and I did and excuse me, you are not trustworthy?" I gave a small laugh and then continued "To keep someones trust you have to keep a code or creed which lets them know what you will do in certain events. You broke my trust when you betrayed your ideals.".

"I haven't betrayed anything." Hiccup defended.

"So what you are saying is that I never really knew you and the real Hiccup would leave a dragon in a living hell, trapped forever, and not care about learning about it. What happened to the Hiccup who took pity on a trapped and wounded Nightfury? The one who was adamant making peace with 'all' dragons despite how many people disagreed with you?" I reminded him. Hiccup just stared blankly into the back of Toothless's neck for several seconds.

"Ok." Hiccup responded.

"Ok, what?" I asked, needing a little more context.

"Let's tame a Skrill." Hiccup responded with enthusiasm.

The Skrill was headed north east and it seemed to be in a hurry but that wasn't a problem for two Nightfury's. It seemed to grow weak and slowed it's pace considerably but it looked like we were already at it's destination. Three mountains stretched out of the sea and an formed a U-shaped island with a large basin of snow and ice permanently frozen between them in this northern climate. The Skrill approached this island and started hovering looking confused. It turned to see us keeping our distance and roared at us. The Skrill then turned around again and fired a lightning bolt into a seemingly random part of a mountain. However, a cave was exposed and the Skrill dived into it and disappeared into the mountain.

"No no Freya. This is bound to be a trap." Hiccup cautioned as I started to advance towards the hole.

"Right, because the second most intelligent and rare dragon in the world tired itself out flying all the way here, wasted one of it's shots to enter this mountain, and put itself in a position where there is no access to clouds or thunderstorms so it can recharge. Oh yeah this is definitely a trap." I responded sarcastically.

"There could be other Skrill's waiting for us." Hiccup responded.

"Yes because the mutton loving Skrill's would choose a cold barren Island, with no sheep for miles, as it's choice habitat." I responded, once again, sarcastically. Hiccup looked like he was about to respond again but then gave up. We approached the cave and landed near the entrance. We slowly moved into the cave. It was dark but neither Starfire or Toothless gave warning growls so we entered further and lit a few torches so we could see. The cave was immediately identifiable as an unnatural creation. There were no stalactites or stalagmites and the tunnel was uniformly wide enough for a Skrill or Nightfury to fly through it. The only variations in the smooth walls were some small cracks and rough patches of different ores..

"What is this, a mineshaft?" I asked Hiccup.

"No. There is ore everywhere in the walls, no pickaxe marks, and miners would have support beams holding up the ceiling. It looks like this tunnel was either melted out or blasted." Hiccup observed.

"So it had to be dragons but why? A Whispering Death is the only dragon that makes tunnels and they don't melt the rock in order to dig." I elaborated.

"I don't know but this Skrill obviously knows about this place and I don't want it escaping through a different tunnel. We need to follow it in quickly." Hiccup stated.

"Were was this hasty need to follow and learn about the Skrill yesterday?" I mocked getting on the back of Starfire.

"Could you just drop that? We are here, following the Skrill, aren't

we?" Hiccup complained mounting Toothless.

"No thanks to you." I cooed taking off on Starfire and ending the conversation. My torch blew out immediately and I couldn't see a thing but luckily Starfire could see everything. We flew deeper and deeper into the mountain but then I could see a pale light at the end of the tunnel. Soon we broke free of the tunnel and into the light. Starfire immediately landed and hid behind a snow embankment. The Skrill was standing several feet ahead of us and looking over a large hill of snow with it's back turned towards us. Hiccup soon made it out of the tunnel and landed next to me. We were in some sort of ice cave which, I assume, is beneath the basin of snow and ice between the three mountains.

"Okay. It looks calm now. We should approach it without dragons and see if we can tame it." I dictated.

Hiccup nodded and I jumped off of Starfire and it made a satisfying poof noise when my feet hit the snow. Hiccup jumped off of Toothless but when his metal leg hit the snow it made a clanking sound. We both looked at Hiccup's feet to see he was standing on a white object that was not snow or ice. Hiccup brushed the snow around the object and revealed that it was a bone. Upon seeing this Toothless dug around the bone to reveal the skeleton of a dragon.

"Hiccup!?" I exclaimed "This is the skeleton of a Nightfury!".

Hiccup looked stunned but then replied "How ... how does this Skrill know about this place and why would it come back to a place were there were once Nightfurys".

"I don't know ... maybe this was a Skrill nest before Nightfurys took it over. I just wish there was more light so we tell the bones apart from the snow." I replied. I pulled out my torch again and had Starfire light it. As I lifted it above my head I saw three more bones sticking out of the ground. One of them was visible enough to be identified as another Nightfury skeleton. I walked over to another one and began to dig.

"This was a Skrill?!" I exclaimed "and with only a few breaks in the bones. This doesn't make any sense. If this was a Skrill nest taken over by Nightfurys or a Nightfury nest taken over by Skrills they wouldn't leave the skeleton of there enemies laying on the floor for all the years they would use it as a nest.". I looked back over for Hiccup to get his opinion but he had left from where he was last. I looked around and saw both Hiccup and Toothless standing to the Skrills left and staring over the snow hill.

"Hiccup!" I half shouted and half whispered. I instantly thought he was going back on our deal and trying to neutralize the Skrill himself. However, as I watched him I saw that he was just standing there, next to the Skrill and gazing at whatever lay beyond the hill. I decided to approach them as Hiccup didn't seem to be making any attempts to tame the Skrill. As I made my way up to the Skrills right I gasped and was frozen at what I saw on the other side of the hill.

Thousands...

Thousands of skeletons, Nightfurys and Skrills alike, all strewn out across the massive ice cave in front of us.

"It's not a nest." Hiccup said, his emotion cracking his voice "It was a fort and this was a battleground.".

"The Skrills were fighting the Nightfurys?" I asked. The Skrill turned to me and stared into my eyes. It's eyes then flicked past me to look at Starfire and it's pupils narrowed. Instead of attacking it let out a mournful roar and continued gazing out at the graveyard.

"Apparently." Hiccup stated blankly.

"Then ... how come Starfire or Toothless didn't know about this?" I asked still trying to get over the shock of this realization.

"My guess is that they were born after the war. What I don't understand is how we didn't know. This was only one battle in what looks like would have been a massive war. How is it that not a single person saw any part of this war happening and didn't write any of it down?" Hiccup asked. We stood in silence after Hiccup's statement and continued looking out over the graveyard.

"They did." I stated as something clicked in my head "Fishlegs told me what that text was that you struck out in the Nightfury section of the Book of Dragons. 'The unholy offspring of lightning and death'. The only Nightfurys left in existence today were the ones that were not yet hatched. The only ones to survive were the offspring that hatched after the war with the lightning dragons that nearly caused the death of two species.". The Skrill let out another loud roar into the cave and started looking back and forth at Toothless and Starfire. They both didn't like the Skrills attention and started growling and getting into defensive postures. Hiccup and I tried calming them but it wasn't working. The Skrill roared again and turned around and moved to the other side of the hill stretching out its wings and roaring. Starfire and Toothless retreated and stood side by side roaring back at the Skrill.

"Stop this! You are one the most intelligent dragons so I know you can understand most of what I am saying" I said to the Skrill standing between it and the two Nightfury's "This war has been over for years! Look around you. Do you think there was any winner here?". The Skrill stared at me and I could see an ancient hate in it's eye. A hate for the Nightfurys that it had fought for years and a hate for the humans that had caused it nothing but pain. I took a step closer to the Skrill.

"I know you must be angry. Your race is about as rare as the Nightfurys so you must have lost loved ones. But fighting doesn't bring the ones you love back. You can only keep yourself strong enough to hope that you can find them one day." I stated taking another step closer to the Skrill. Lightning sparked all around its body but I did not relent my approach.

"The only thing any war is about is proving who is strongest. Look around you again. Is this what you want the legacy of your race to be? does this look like strength to you? You may be one of the last Skrills in existence and all you want to do is prove your strength by fighting." I reasoned stepping closer to the Skrill. It roared as it

perceived this as a threat, its body was still sparking with lightning. I was right in front of the Skrill now.

"Your strength is not measured by what you can do alone but by what those you surround yourself with can do. If you want to be strong enough to ensure your races future you first have to be strong enough to bury the past." I said putting my hand near it's snout. If it didn't calm down and I touched it I would be fried by the lightning bouncing around its scales.

"I am going to give you a chance to prove your strength without endangering your species. I know you are strong enough to find peace ..." I said.

"... Now you just have to prove it." I said as I closed my eye's and reached forward with my hand.

My hand touched the Skrills snout.

A sensation shot through my body coming from my arm. I opened my eyes and looked at the calm Skrill in front of me. It purred softly as it folded it's wings. I smiled but the Skrill retracted from my hand and looked back over the graveyard of Nightfury's and it's kin. It let out an ear splitting roar and it's body began sparking again. Suddenly it let out a lightning bolt at the ceiling of the ice cave. The ice above us began to crack and groan. It unleashed another one into the ice and there was still no major effect. The Skrill roared in frustration as the cave did not collapse. Suddenly a purple light appeared behind me and then a plasma blast hit the ceiling. Both Starfire and Toothless fired at the ice in key spots and it began to crack. With the Skrills final shot it hit an area in the ice and a massive crack appeared and continued to grow.

"We need to leave, now!" Hiccup commanded getting on the back of Toothless. I got on Starfire and all three dragons flew to the tunnel we had come from and out into the open air. We turned around and hovered as the ice cave collapsed and buried the remains of the war.

Berk prepared for an attack as they saw the Skrill flying behind us. They must have assumed that it was chasing us but Hiccup flew down first and straightened everything out. I took the Skrill to the feeding stations and got it some mutton. I left it as I saw Hiccup walking through town and joined up with him.

"So ... it looks like the Skrill was tamed and no harm was done to Berk. Just ... like I said would happen." I taunted as I walked with him.

"Fine Freya you were right and I was wrong is that what you wanted to hear." Hiccup said defeatedly.

"Oh yeah. That was it exactly. Thank you." I said taunting him.

"And because you were right and I was wrong the punishment for your mutiny won't be as severe." Hiccup said.

"Really? I just tamed a Skrill and ended a dragon war and you are fussing about the details?" I said.

"You tied up Ruffnut in her own home and kidnapped and interrogated Tuffnut. Those aren't details. That is high treason. Any citizen of Berk would be lucky to have as light a punishment for those crimes as my dad is giving you." Hiccup explained.

"First of all, ask would be a more appropriate word than interrogate and secondly I am not a ..." I complained but Hiccup cut me off. He stopped walking and put his hands on my shoulders.

"Yes you are. You may not have been born here but if you are willing to accept it, this place can be your home. You will always be a Berkian in my eyes." Hiccup explained looking me in the eyes. I was speechless and was unable to respond. Hiccup continued "So for the first part of your punishment you will need to report to Gobber's forge tomorrow morning. You will be there right?".

"Yeah. Of course. I promise." I replied softly.

Hiccup looked over my shoulder and said "If you want to keep that promise, you should start running."

"FREYA!" I winced as I heard Ruffnut scream my name from behind me. This was going to hurt.

### 33. Unfinished Chapter

**\*\*AN:** If you where offended that Lightning and Death was reposted I hope that you find a small amount of entertainment in this small amount of writing. I have had a writers block for this story for so long this is all I have written in around six months. **\*\***

#### -Hiccups Point of View Through Storytelling-

After Astrid and I got Fishlegs to safety we worked on freeing both him and Meatlug from the net. As we were maneuvering the last of the netting around both of their husky frames Snotlout and Hookfang landed next to us.

Astrid started yelling before I could talk "What are you doing Snotlout? Get back out there and work on those ships!".

"I can't, Hookfang is all out. He needs to rest for a while." Snotlout said, gesturing to his dragon which coughed up small droplets of flame. The twins landed soon after.

"What's going on? Why isn't everyone blowing something up." Tuff yelled.

"We are pulling back for some rest. Everyone be ready to fly in five minutes." I commanded.

"Um, where is Freya?" Snotlout asked. I looked over to see no dragons in the air above the bay. Suddenly, I saw Starfire to the right over the beach. Freya and Starfire were flying at high speed over the beach and strait at the approaching ships.

"She just fell off!" Astrid called as we all saw a dark figure fall off Starfire's back.



"Astrid come on, we have to get her out of that water before she ..."  
I commanded before I was interrupted by a loud bang and a brilliant  
ball of purple light that consumed the incoming ships.

"Cool" the twins cooed in unison.

"You were saying." Astrid mocked as we saw Starfire circle around and  
hover over where Freya had fallen. A straggler ship sailed around the  
burning ships and fired a net at Starfire. She fell into the ocean  
with Freya.

"Everyone in the air now!" I commanded. We took off and headed for the  
ship. Getting closer we could see they had both Starfire and Freya  
captured in the net.

"Stay back!" I commanded as the ship started firing at us.

"Hiccup what do we do?" Astrid questioned.

\*\*AN: Very under-welming I know. This is a writers trap for me as I  
want to write the next act but the story is currently in a lull  
time.\*\*

\*\*Therefore, If anyone wants to help me write this chapter out I  
would be very grateful. The events of the chapter should progress as  
follows: \*\*

\*\*Midnight Sun is told from the perspective of Hiccup\*\*

\*\*The Dragon riders find Freya passed out on the beach and Astrid is  
charged to take care of her\*\*

\*\*Arbiter lands on Berk and Hiccup, Stoick, and Alvin go to talk to  
him\*\*

\*\*Arbiter reveals that he was investigating the source of the surge  
of Pirates that have attacked the empire's settlements\*\*

\*\*Arbiter tells Hiccup that it is his responsibility to expand Berks  
influence and prevent pirates and raiders from heading east and  
threatens that if they can't stop the pirates then a legion of the  
empire's soldiers will most likely be sent into these waters to purge  
it of all uncivilized life.\*\*

\*\*Arbiter and Alvin depart.\*\*

\*\*I am very sorry to everyone who was expecting a new chapter for so  
long.\*\*

End  
file.